RWS 305W: Writing in Various Settings
Spring 2015
Section 58

COURSE INFORMATION
Instructor: Kathryn Valentine
Contact: 619-594-3537 or kvalentine@mail.sdsu.edu
Class Days: Tuesday and Thursday
Office Hours (and by appointment): Tuesday 11:30am-12:30 pm and Thursday 11:00am-12:00pm
Class Times: 2:00-3:15pm
Office Hours Location: SHW-115
Class Location: PFSA-113

Course Overview
RWS 305W asks you to engage with writing in a variety of forms and for a variety of situations. We will work to understand the many ways that individuals write today and explore some of the settings in which this writing takes place. The course also asks you to work on your own writing by completing a variety of writing assignments—both in print and new media, reading about writing, responding to other students’ writing, and reflecting on and revising your own work. This course meets the upper-division writing requirement for students who complete the class with a grade of “C” or better. Students who successfully complete the course will be prepared to analyze and write in a variety of situations.

Please see the Student Learning Outcomes at the end of the syllabus for detailed learning goals for this course.

Enrollment Information
All RWS 305W students must have satisfactorily completed RWS 100 and RWS 200 or the equivalent. RWS 305W students must also have completed the WPA with a score of 8 or 9 or RWS 280 with a grade of “C” or better.

Course Materials
• Additional course readings: You will be asked to access additional course readings via Blackboard, the web or as handouts from the instructor.
• You will need to access free software on the internet (or use software of your choice) to create new media assignments. The class will support the use of Audacity (a free program you can download to your computer for audio editing) and Storify (a web-based program for compiling webpages).

Course Structure and Conduct
• This course is designed to engage you in a variety of activities. Most class days will involve a variety of formats including large and small group discussion, in-class writing, short lectures, and student presentations.
• You will complete both informal and formal writing assignments. The final assignment will be a collaborative one.
• Participation is also strongly encouraged and valued as part of this course.

Course Assessment and Grading
Along with course readings, informal writing, and class discussions there are four main assignments in this course. You will be given feedback on Projects 2 and 4 before you receive a grade and will be expected to revise those drafts. If you are unclear at any time about the assignments or have questions about your work including your course grade, please discuss your concerns and questions with me in office hours or by appointment. All students must satisfactorily complete all main assignments in order to receive a passing grade in this course. The assignments are weighted as follows: Project 1: 10%, Project 2: 20%, Project 3: 10%, Project 4: 40%, Participation, Attendance and Informal Assignments 20%.

Each assignment will receive a letter grade based on the quality of work it contains. (The value of the letter grades corresponds to the recommended values in the SDSU catalog. For example, “A” is equivalent to 4.0, “A-” to 3.7, “B+” is 3.3, “B” is 3.0, etc.)
Participation will also be assigned a letter grade that takes into consideration both your attendance and your level of involvement in class discussions, group work, peer reviews, and informal writing assignments and presentations.

**Students with Disabilities**

If you are a student with a disability and believe you will need accommodations for this class, it is your responsibility to contact Student Disability Services at (619) 594-6473. To avoid any delay in the receipt of your accommodations, you should contact Student Disability Services as soon as possible. Please note that accommodations are not retroactive, and that accommodations based upon disability cannot be provided until you have presented your instructor with an accommodation letter from Student Disability Services. Your cooperation is appreciated.

**Academic Honesty**

The University adheres to a strict policy regarding cheating and plagiarism. Become familiar with the policy (http://www.sa.sdsu.edu/srr/conduct1.html). Any cheating or plagiarism will result in failing this class and a disciplinary review by Student Affairs.

Examples of Plagiarism include but are not limited to:

- Using sources verbatim or paraphrasing without giving proper attribution (this can include phrases, sentences, paragraphs and/or pages of work)
- Copying and pasting work from an online or offline source directly and calling it your own
- Using information you find from an online or offline source without giving the author credit
- Replacing words or phrases from another source and inserting your own words or phrases
- Submitting a piece of work you did for one class to another class

If you have questions on what is plagiarism, please consult the policy (http://www.sa.sdsu.edu/srr/conduct1.html) and this helpful guide from the Library: (http://infodome.sdsu.edu/infolit/exploratorium/Standard_5/plagiarism.pdf)

**Assignments**

Below is an overview of the course assignments. You will receive more detailed information and criteria for each of the four projects as they are assigned in class. Please see the course schedule for due dates.

**Project 1: Writing About Writing (10 points)**

For this paper, you will both describe and analyze a literacy practice or event that helps you understand an aspect of writing today. You might write about a practice that you particularly enjoy or one that you do not understand and want to come to know better. (Approximately 3-4 pages)

**Project 2: Writing About Experiences (20 points)**

For this project, you will write either a memoir about a significant experience you have had that you think others can benefit from reading about OR you will write a profile of a person whose experience you think others can benefit from reading about. Your first draft of the project will be written as a print essay. You second draft of the project will be composed as an audio essay in Audacity or a program of your choice. (Approximately 3-5 pages)

**Project 3: Writing as Reporting (10 points)**

For this project, you will compose a report on an issue that interests you for any reason. This report can take a variety of forms, which we will discuss in class. You will also present your report to the class. This presentation will serve as a way to form groups for Project 4. (Approximately 2-3 pages)

**Project 4: Writing About An Issue (40 points)**

For this project, you will work collaboratively with two other students in the class to create a multi-genre project about the issue that your group selected. This may include writing a commentary on the issue, creating a proposal to address the issue, and/or composing multimodal texts related to the issue. The exact form your project takes will be negotiated in your group and then approved by me. Most likely your group will create a portfolio of documents such as a proposal related to your issue, a revised version of the report on your issue, and a visual component such as a web page or ad campaign using the software Storify. (Equivalent to approximately 8-10 pages)
Informal Writing, Class Participation and Attendance (20 points)
Informal writing will be evaluated on a credit/no credit basis and is only accepted in class on the day it is assigned. Class participation will be evaluated largely based on participating in all peer workshops as well as large and small group discussions and informal presentations.

Attendance: No more than two absences, either excused or unexcused, are allowed without penalty during the session. Absences beyond this will be reflected in a lower participation grade—clearly you cannot participate if you have not attended. The higher number of absences, the greater effect there will be on the participation portion of your grade, and it is possible to receive a failing grade in the participation part of your overall grade based on lack of attendance. Note that students who leave during class will be marked absent.

TOTAL POINTS= 100

Late Projects
Deadlines for assignments are listed on the class schedule. There will be a 10% penalty on assignments submitted after the published deadlines, including deadlines for drafts and peer workshops. If, at the end of the semester, all assignments but one have come in on time, I will give you the 10% back. Please contact me before the due date if you will miss an assignment deadline.

Interacting with me
I see my role as your instructor to both support and challenge you to learn more about yourself as a writer and composer. I am here to answer questions and to provide feedback on work in progress. Please see me throughout the semester if you have any questions, concerns, or just want to talk about the course. You can reach me via email or Blackboard and during my office hours. I am also happy to meet by appointment—just email me or talk to me before or after class to set up a time.

During the week, I will try to respond to questions on Blackboard or email within 24 hours.

Student Learning Goals

Rhetorical Knowledge
Students will learn how to

- Respond effectively in writing to issues and arguments raised in a variety of disciplinary, popular, and professional texts and/or contexts
- Identify individual discourse communities and find and analyze their characteristic texts, evaluate their credibility and principles, and apply relevant aspects of their information to other contexts and arguments
- Analyze the details of a wide variety of writing situations (textual elements such as tone, evidence, organizational patterns, diction, even visuals) according to the author’s purpose as well as the audience’s needs and tastes
- Understand the concept of rhetorical situations: the relationship among writer-audience-subject-context

Critical Thinking and Reading
Students will learn how to

- Use “language about language” that enables a writer to reflect on the use of rhetorical strategies as well as strengths, difficulties, and progress as a working writer
- Apply critical reading strategies to a variety of publicly and individually produced texts
- Work with demanding readings and learn to interpret, incorporate, and evaluate these readings
- Use writing as a way to learn—to think about, question, and communicate ideas
- Understand the relationships among language, knowledge and power

Writing Processes
RWS 305W will enhance students’ abilities to develop writing processes that reflect invention, inquiry, revision, and editing. Students will learn how to

- Develop successful, flexible strategies for generating, revising, and editing texts
- Understand the collaborative and social aspects of the writing process
- Critique their own and others’ texts
Knowledge of Conventions
Students will learn to

- Understand the ways various discourse communities use different strategies for conveying information, researching information, and evaluating and analyzing information
- Analyze audience expectations about conventions and address them in critical ways
- Effectively integrate a variety of sources into their writings
- Practice appropriate means of documenting their sources
- Sustain reasonable correctness in grammar and mechanics to perform well in a variety of writing contexts and professional settings

Attitudes, Values, and Preparation for Life Beyond the University
RWS 305W reflects the values of a liberal arts education, namely,

- Working cooperatively with others to achieve mutually defined goals, face-to-face in the classroom and in other settings
- Respecting the diverse voices and perspectives that characterize life in a multi-cultural classroom and society
- Applying critical reading strategies to a variety of publicly and individually produced texts
- Valuing free expression and the ability to participate confidently in public discussion on issues of importance to the workplace and the community
- Showing initiative in problem solving situations