

ENG 210

Intro to Rhetoric and Writing

WHEN: T-TH | 3:30-4:45

WHERE: Robert Bell 113

INSTRUCTOR: Dr. Rory Lee

EMAIL: rlee2@bsu.edu

OFFICE: RB 2108

OFFICE HOURS: TBD

COURSE DESCRIPTION:

This course functions as an introduction not only to the academic field of Rhetoric and Composition but also to the Rhetoric and Writing major at Ball State. During the semester, we'll explore both parts of the field: Rhetoric *and* Composition. To that end, we'll begin with an historical tour through Ancient Greece, the birthplace of western rhetoric, by familiarizing ourselves with the three schools of thought that constitute the Greek Trilogy: Sophistic, Platonic, and Aristotelian. In focusing on this triumvirate and its founding figures, we'll unpack how each school of thought subscribes to a different epistemology that shapes its particular understanding of rhetoric, and we'll cover the major rhetorical theories and concepts associated with each school. Although we'll work to understand the historical context that underpins and informs these three schools of thought, we'll also situate our coverage of the Greek Trilogy within our contemporary culture in an effort to understand better how the conversations and concepts from Ancient Greece matter and are still meaningful to our current "post-truth" era.

Next, we'll move to the 20th Century and grapple with the works and theories of rhetoricians such as I.A. Richards, Kenneth Burke, Michel Foucault, and Gloria Anzaldúa. In so doing, we'll consider the following questions, among others:

- how do words come to have meaning?



- how does misunderstanding occur?
- how does language create and shape reality?
- how do we identify through language?
- how is language use controlled, regulated, and always an extension of and in service to power?
- how is language identity-formative and pluralistic?

And throughout, we'll concentrate on the ways these rhetoricians are responding and reacting to the past as well as speaking to and building off of one another.

In the concluding portion of the course, we'll work more specifically with the second part of the field: Composition (also known as Writing Studies). To begin, we'll attend briefly to the emergence and evolution of Composition as an academic discipline, and here, we'll pay special attention to how changes in epistemology, student populations, and historical contexts have ushered in and influenced paradigmatic shifts in the teaching of writing over the past century. Then, we'll tackle various threshold concepts that, as a set, offer ways of knowing and doing that are foundational to the practice and teaching of writing.

In working to understand both histories—Rhetoric's and Composition's—we'll investigate how language shapes the world in which we live and how we can use language to understand and navigate that world more effectively.

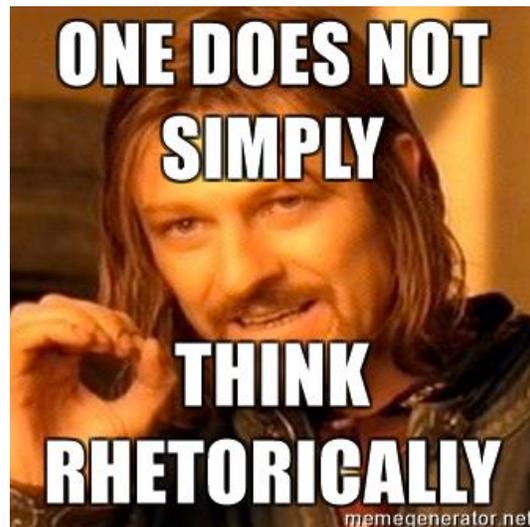
To ground and frame our work this semester, we'll move across three units:

- **UNIT 1:** The Greek Trilogy
- **UNIT 2:** The (Post)Modern 20th Century
- **UNIT 3:** The Threshold Concepts of Writing Studies

COURSE GOALS AND OUTCOMES:

Upon successfully completing this course, you'll be able to:

- think rhetorically in ways that enhance your ability to think critically;
- define rhetoric and articulate the relationship between epistemology and rhetoric;
- employ rhetorical theories and concepts in both the analysis and creation of diverse texts intended for different audiences;
- understand, approach, and respond more appropriately to the endless rhetorical situations you encounter/create;
- identify, articulate, and practice foundational ways of knowing and



- doing in Rhetoric and Composition;
 - comprehend the extensive and complex history of the field of Rhetoric and Composition and the tenuous status the field has as a discipline within the academy;
 - grasp the ways that rhetoric is inextricably linked to your understanding of and participation in personal, professional, and civic arenas; and
 - play!
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COURSE REQUIREMENTS:

In order to succeed in this course, you must:

- try, think, and reflect;
 - participate consistently in class and online;
 - read regularly and on time (most readings are located in the “Assigned Readings” module on Canvas);
 - work collaboratively with classmates;
 - complete all projects and turn them in as they are due; and
 - show respect to both your teacher and peers.
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TEXTS:

Adler-Kassner, Linda, and Elizabeth Wardle. *Naming What We Know: Threshold Concepts of Writing Studies*. Logan, UT: Utah State University Press, 2015.

GRADING:

- | | |
|----------------------------------|------------------|
| • Project 1: Greek Trilogy | 20% (200 points) |
| • Project 2: Rhetorical Analysis | 20% (200 points) |
| • Project 3: Threshold Concepts | 20% (200 points) |
| • Journals (10 at 25 points per) | 25% (250 points) |
| • QQTs (15 at 10 points per) | 15% (150 points) |

Total: 1,000 points

All projects must be completed to earn a passing grade in this course.

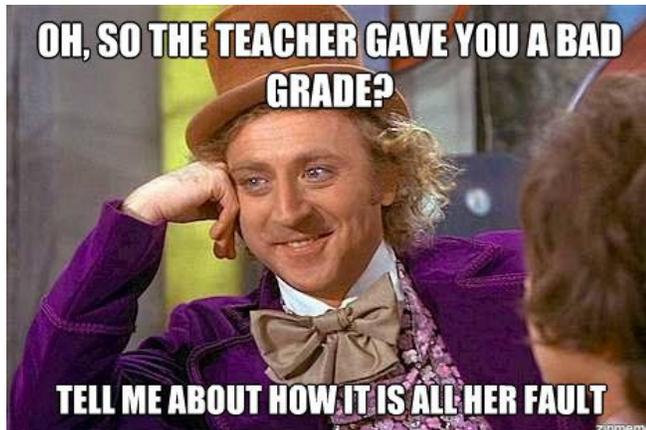
EVALUATION:

- **PROJECTS:** For each project, you’ll be assessed on your ability to adapt to the rhetorical situation you construct and operate within. In general, that means you’ll be assessed on your audience-awareness, genre-awareness, arrangement, style, delivery, rhetorical strategies, and ability to defend your rhetorical decisions. Assessment might also include specific composing areas that will be emphasized during class activities

and discussions geared toward said project. In class, we'll work collaboratively to determine assessment criteria for each project, including what we mean and value with each criterion and how much each criterion is worth.

- With each project, you'll also complete a **RHETORICAL RATIONALE**. These rationales, which I rely on to assess your work, provide you the opportunity to articulate parts of your composing process, to clarify and elaborate on specific portions of your text, and to reflect on your text and the process of creating it. More importantly, however, these rationales are a space for you to defend and justify your rhetorical strategies and approach, to explain why you created the text you did and how it's rhetorically appropriate and effective (or not) considering your rhetorical situation.

- **JOURNALS:** You'll have 10 assigned journals worth 25 points each (250 points total). You'll also have the opportunity to complete two bonus journals at the end of the semester. Journals are to be completed and posted on Canvas within the "Assignments" page. Journals are graded on content, effort, and thoughtfulness.



- **QQTs:** "QQT" stands for "question, question, takeaway," and you'll post two questions and one takeaway for the assigned reading(s) that include "and do QQT" in the homework section (**HW:**) within the "Course Calendar" module on Canvas. You'll post your QQTs within the "Assignments" page on Canvas, and you'll have 15 assigned QQTs during the semester worth 10 points each (150 points total).

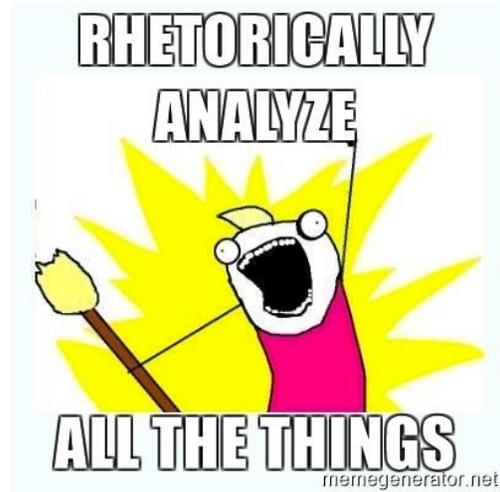
All other composed and oral work will be graded on meaning or content and on appropriateness to the assignment.

PROJECT DESCRIPTIONS:

- **PROJECT 1 – GREEK TRILOGY (20%):** After learning about the three schools of thought that constitute the Greek Trilogy (i.e., Sophists, Platonics, and Aristotelians), you'll create an informational text for the audience of new (read: novice) Rhetoric and Writing students that unpacks and explicates how each group defined and understood rhetoric. To that end, you'll need to articulate how each school's epistemology

shapes a particular and different conception of what rhetoric is, how it functions, and what its relationship is to truth. You might start by tackling each rhetorician and the school of thought they represent individually, but eventually, you'll need to put the three in dialogue with one another. In other words, you'll need to talk across them as a set in nuanced ways in order to tease out and highlight similarities and differences between and amongst them. **DUE: Friday, October 4th.**

- **PROJECT 2 – RHETORICAL ANALYSIS (20%):** After familiarizing yourself with the works of rhetoricians such as I.A. Richards, Kenneth Burke, Michel Foucault, and Gloria Anzaldúa, you'll use at least one of the rhetorical concepts or theoretical lenses they offer to create a project that conducts a rhetorical analysis of a specific text (e.g., a movie, a commercial, an image, a monument, a song, a speech, a written document, a webpage, a tweet, etc.). In creating your project, you'll need to attend to your "So What? Factor"—that is, you'll need to articulate why this rhetorical analysis matters—especially given the audience you're targeting and text you're analyzing. **DUE: Tuesday, November 19th.**



- **PROJECT 3 – THRESHOLD CONCEPTS (20%):** After reading about and grappling with threshold concepts in the field of Composition (a.k.a. Writing Studies), you'll create a text that shares and explains three-to-five threshold concepts that together establish a foundation for how *you* understand and participate in the act of writing. These threshold concepts can include those archived in *Naming What We Know* as well as those you develop on your own. In composing your text, you'll need to clarify how the threshold concepts you've identified and explicated not only affect the way you think about and engage in the writing process but also matter given your target audience. **DUE: Sunday, December 15th.**
 - **ALTERNATIVE PROJECTS:** For each of the three projects, you'll have the opportunity to create an alternative project—say, one with a different purpose and/or for a different audience. In order to create an alternative project, you must submit a proposal detailing the purpose of, audience for, and genre of the text. The content of your text must be germane given the unit of study, and I must approve of your proposal.

All projects must be grounded within a specific rhetorical situation, one you ultimately construct for yourself, and delivered to your target audience(s).

JOURNALS:

I'll post a prompt for each journal on Canvas in the "Assignments" page. Your journal should be thoughtful and show the depth of your thinking process. Moreover, journal topics often take on a more personal nature and require that you position yourself into the discussion at hand. In other words, these topics will be applicable to you; they're a means for you to make sense of the class, its projects, and its keywords, theories, and concepts. As such, journals aren't merely busy work; rather, they're integral to your understanding of class material and furthering your ability to make meaning.

In addition, we'll often share journals in class, so make sure you create content that you're confident talking about and sharing with others. Your journals will be graded on content, and your effort will be seriously taken into account. Unlike free writes completed in class, journals should show more range and depth; there should be a greater sense of coherency. *Simply writing a couple of sentences will not suffice.*



QQTs AND CLASS DISCUSSION:

This course and its content are intended to help you both **know** and **do** rhetoric and writing in well-informed, thoughtful ways. Toward that end, we'll work respectfully and collaboratively to see value in different perspectives with the goal of fostering **critical thinking**, which is to say: it's one thing to understand the course material and the ideas expressed therein; it's another to engage with them, discuss them, apply them, critique them, question them, and respond to them. We want to do all of that—not just the understanding. As such, you'll need to come to class ready to think, collaborate, and participate.

As a whole, then, your participation in class is imperative. And if we all participate, you'll want to come to class. Although I'm capable of it, I don't intend to act as a lecturer. In other words, you'll very much dictate where our conversations go. I'll assist us along the way, of course, but in doing so, I'll often look for your input. We truly are, as the metaphor goes, a team. For some of you, this may feel antithetical to your previous classroom experiences; however, over time, I hope you find this model both productive and edifying.

To help you both understand better the readings and prepare for class discussion, you'll provide "two Questions and one Takeaway" (QQT) for most assigned readings. You'll post your questions and takeaway (together) to the "Assignments" page on Canvas. These questions and takeaways are valuable for three reasons:

1. they let me know whether you're keeping up with the assigned readings,
2. they push you to read texts through a critical lens, and
3. they provide questions, areas, and avenues for us to explore during class discussion.

With the latter, this is your opportunity to ask questions and dictate our discussion of the assigned readings. Put another way, you should be asking questions that are pressing to you. Thus, don't post hypothetical questions; that is, questions for which you already have an answer, or questions that could be answered easily through a quick Google or Wikipedia search. Instead, try to ask two types of questions: (1) **content questions**: those intended to clarify and help you comprehend and understand better what you read, and (2) **critical questions**: those that engage critically with the text by applying and/or critiquing the content therein. In short, QQT is for your benefit: it is designed so you're able to voice burning questions, so you're able to gain what you desire from the assigned readings. Take full advantage of this opportunity.

Overall, while you're in class, please do what you can to make our discussions accessible, productive, and useful to everyone. This takes a great deal of energy; I realize that. Some of the texts we read may seem impenetrable at first because the authors are dense writers, their primary audience isn't undergraduate students, they're drawing from a different discourse community, their ideas may challenge your worldview, and/or you're unfamiliar with their historical context. I'll do my absolute best to ensure that our class time is spent meaningfully, but I nonetheless expect you to spend time with the material and work through it in order to help you situate yourself and the reading(s).

ME



WHEN NO ONE PARTICIPATES
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ATTENDANCE AND TARDIES:

Coming to class is (duh!) important. Our time spent as a class sharing ideas, engaging in dialogue, and grappling with larger theories and concepts will prove most beneficial to your development as a student and your understanding of digital literacies. My rules concerning attendance are thus:

- You are allotted 3 "unexcused" absences; consider these 3 "freebies."
- After 3 unexcused absences, your grade will be adversely affected per additional unexcused absence.
- If you accrue 6 or more unexcused absences, **you cannot pass the course.**

There are “excused” absences. Excused absences include documented illness, deaths in the family and other documented crises, call to active military duty or jury duty, religious holy days, and official University activities. These absences will be accommodated in a way that does not arbitrarily penalize students who have a valid excuse. Consideration will also be given to students whose dependent children experience serious illness.

Please note that punctuality is important. The class and I start on time; you should be there. **Three tardies will result in an absence.** *It is better to be five minutes early than late.*

Lastly, if possible, please do let me know if you’re going to be absent and why. Attendance is mandatory, yes, but I’m also fully aware that life is messy and complicated and that shit happens. Please keep me in the loop and updated if extenuating circumstances arise.



LATE WORK:

Late work will not be tolerated. Journals and QQTs that are late will receive less credit, and if they are late by more than two class periods, they will receive zero credit. A project will also be marked down a letter grade (e.g., A to A-) for each class period that it is late. In other words, be responsible and punctual in completing your work. That said, extensions are available for those with extenuating circumstances (e.g., ADA, health-related issues, emergencies, severe computer and technical problems, etc.). As such, please do let me know if there’s a reason you don’t think you’ll be able to complete your work on time, so we can negotiate a plan going forward.

PLAGIARISM:

Since we’re all here to learn, I assume you won’t cheat or plagiarize. Although the concept of originality is fraught and frequently misunderstood and oversimplified, blatant plagiarism is still incredibly tacky. Plain and simple: *it will not be tolerated.*

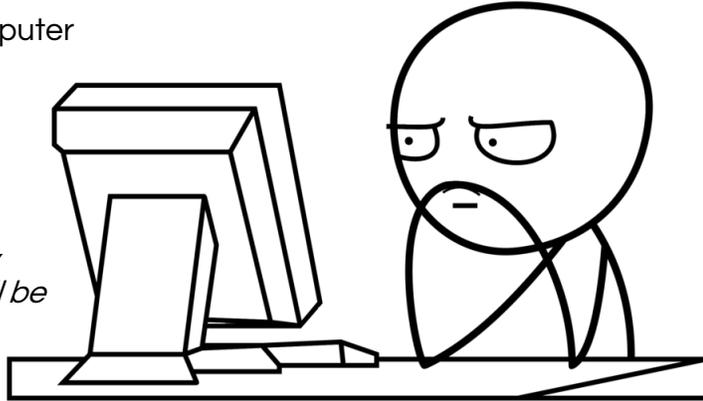
If you have any questions concerning plagiarism and/or citation, please contact me.

COMPUTER ACCESS:

Computers (and technology) will be an integral part of the course. Consequently, you need to have access to computers outside of class, and in particular, you'll need to have Adobe Reader (which is free) to view and read (most of) the assigned readings. In addition, you need to bring your laptop/tablet to class every day unless informed otherwise, as we'll engage in many exercises that will require you to write and/or work in digital environments.

That said, don't abuse your computer privileges; that is, don't become physically absent by immersing yourself in your laptop/tablet in ways that aren't pertinent to the class and its materials— *and if I see you doing this, I'll give you a warning; the next time, I'll simply ask you to leave class, and you'll be marked absent for the day.*

Also: this habit results in a colossal waste of money.



Lastly, you need to prepare yourself for potential technological problems. Yes, I'm aware that computers crash and work gets misplaced/erased; thus, you need to take precautions and be prepared for that possibility. Save your work frequently. Back up your work. Buy a flashdrive. Create a cloud account. I urge you, however, to explain your situation to me if one arises, as we all experience difficulties with computers and other technology.

WRITING CENTER:

One key to improving your writing is getting feedback and revision suggestions on your text during the writing process. The Writing Center at Ball State offers free writing feedback sessions (online or face-to-face) to all students. They work with students on essays, reports, reflections, research projects, web content, lesson plans, slideshows, poster presentations, resumes, and other digital or print texts. Students can make an appointment by going to www.bsu.edu/writingcenter, stopping by Robert Bell 295, or by calling 765-285-8370.

DIGITAL WRITING STUDIO:

The Digital Writing Studio (DWS), located in room 116 on the first floor of Robert Bell, provides a working and tutoring space where students (individually or in groups)

1. have access to and can learn how to use digital composing tools, and/or
2. can receive feedback on digital work in progress.

The DWS can help students understand better and work to complete a variety of digital and multimodal projects, such as (but certainly not limited to) constructing a website, producing a video, developing a digital portfolio, creating a blog, leveraging social media, organizing an informational campaign, designing an infographic and other documents, selecting and editing images, crafting a presentation, and writing and producing a podcast. The DWS is equipped with five workstations that house digital composing tools such as Photoshop, InDesign, MovieMaker, iMovie, and more.



In the fall of 2019, the DWS will be open from 12-4 Monday through Thursday and 12-2 on Friday. Students can drop by during open hours, or they can make an appointment by going to www.bsu.edu/writingcenter.

DISABILITY SERVICES:

If you need course adaptations or accommodations because of a disability, please contact me as soon as possible. Ball State's Disability Services office coordinates services for students with disabilities; documentation of a disability needs to be on file in that office before any accommodations can be provided. Disability Services can be contacted at [765-285-5293](tel:765-285-5293) or dsd@bsu.edu.

CAREER CENTER:

Ball State's Career Center is eager to help you think about your future. Their services include individual Career Coaching, drop-in résumé reviews, assistance researching potential careers and internships, and referrals to campus and off-campus jobs. They can tell you more about grad school, job fairs, interviews, and lots more. The English department's designated Career Coach is Ellis Wasserman, ewasserman@bsu.edu, Lucina Hall 219. You can set up an appointment with her through [Cardinal Career Link](#). Also remember that the English department hosts a career series on the last Tuesday of every month.

FOLLOW #BSUENGLISH:

The English Department maintains a blog, Facebook page, and Twitter account. We use these channels to relay information about jobs, internships, immersive learning opportunities, alumni success stories, career ideas, cool events, great books, and literary happenings. If you're thinking about the next step after college, you should definitely follow the English department using these resources.

- Blog: <http://bsuenglish.com>
- Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/bsuenglishdepartment>
- Twitter: @bsuenglish, #bsuenglish

- Instagram: @bsuenglish
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DIVERSITY STATEMENT:

Ball State University aspires to be a university that attracts and retains a diverse faculty, staff and student body. We are committed to ensuring that all members of the campus community are welcome through our practice of valuing the various experiences and world views of those we serve. We promote a culture of respect and civil discourse as evident in our [Beneficence Pledge](#). For Bias Incident Response service information, go to [bsu.edu/multiculturalcenter/bias](https://www.bsu.edu/multiculturalcenter/bias) or e-mail mc2@bsu.edu.

CIVILITY SHEET:

I will tolerate neither disruptive language nor disruptive behavior.

Disruptive language includes—but is not limited to—violent, belligerent, and insulting remarks, including sexist, racist, homophobic, and xenophobic language, either spoken or written (offensive slang is included in this category). While I do not disagree that each of you have a right to your own opinions, inflammatory language founded in ignorance, bigotry, or hate is unacceptable and will be dealt with immediately.



Disruptive behavior includes the inappropriate use of cell phones or other technology during class (e.g., texting, web-browsing, browsing social media, etc.). Disruptive behavior also includes whispering or talking when another member of the class is speaking or engaged in relevant conversation (remember that I am a member of this class as well).

This classroom functions on the premise of respect, and I have no qualms about asking you to leave the classroom if you violate any part of this statement on civility.

SYLLABUS CHANGE POLICY:

This syllabus is subject to reasonable modification given the needs of the class. If that happens, I'll keep you posted.