

University of Rhode Island
Department of Writing & Rhetoric
WRT 104 (Section 0024): Writing to Inform and Explain
Fall 2015

Schedule: TuTh 11:00-12:15
Location:
Instructor: Adrienne Jones Daly

E-mail : Office Hours:
Mailbox: Office:

What this Course Is

We're going to be writing our whole lives: texting friends and family, doing assignments at college, or doing projects and writing e-mails at work. Anyone who has sent a text that was misunderstood or who bombed a project they thought they nailed can attest that writing effectively is not as straightforward as we might think. This course is going to look at what writing effectively means and will help to sharpen your writing skills in preparation for the work you will do both here as a student and in the world beyond. We will be doing a lot of writing: to reflect, to think, to persuade, and to share. Just like any skill, practice makes better.

This course will also encourage us to find our voices as individuals and as members of a larger community. During the semester we will reflect more deeply on how our voice can shape the conversations around us and make a difference in our world.

What You Definitely Need to Know

Grade Calculation

Grades for this course consist of the following areas:

- 20% Course participation
- 40% Four major projects and writing workshops
- 40% Final portfolio

Final Portfolio

The final portfolio is the culmination of all the work and reflection you will be doing over the course of the semester. You will choose 1-3 projects from among the four we will be working on this semester and then further revise and improve them based on feedback, reflection, and concepts learned in class. Along with the revised projects, you will include reflections on the process of writing the projects and how they reflect what you have learned over the course of the semester. The portfolio really is a story of your journey this semester as a writer. This portfolio takes the place of a final exam and is **due on Sakai at noon on Friday, December 18.**

Four Projects

We will be doing four kinds of writing projects this semester: memoir, persuasive argument, profile, and proposal. Along with providing practice in the skills and concepts we will be learning, these projects will also help us to reflect on our role within our communities. Because writing is a process (not a "write it once and be done" deal), you will be writing at least two drafts of each project. The first of these drafts will be shared in a writing workshop, in which classmates read and offer feedback on each other's projects. This kind of reader feedback is

essential for improving our writing, and participation in the writing workshops is mandatory. The second, revised draft is submitted for a grade.

Project 1 – Memoir Essay

The memoir, or personal narrative, provides a chance to write more creatively and learn about one's self while making a connection between the author and the reader. Description and narrative structure will be important. Two reflection pieces will also be part of this project.

Project 2 – Position Argument

This project positions you as a member of a community. You will identify an issue of importance for this community, research the topic, and write to convince the community to change their opinions or approach on this issue. This project will allow you to choose between a more standard essay format or a more creative format of argument. A reflection piece will also be included in this project.

Project 3 – Profile

This project will seek to broaden the idea of community. You will reach out to someone who is from a different community than you and interview them to learn about them and their community. Based on your conversation with them, you will write a profile that brings them to life to your readers. Along with your profile, you will also be submitting notes and reflections on the interview and experience.

Project 4 – Proposal

This final project is a group project. Working together, you will identify a problem facing your community and then propose a solution for the problem. Your proposal will take the form of a presentation in the style of the show *Shark Tank* and fellow classmates and invited guests will get to vote on which proposal they find most compelling. This project includes the presentation and an executive summary.

Course Participation

Course participation is made up of two main components: attendance/participation and homework/reflections.

Homework and Reflections: The homework, both the reading and the writing, prepares you for the class discussions. There will be a lot of short written assignments, most of which (unless I specify otherwise) will be submitted through Sakai and **due by noon the day before class**. These assignments have two purposes: to help you learn through critical thinking and writing, and to help me see what everyone understands or doesn't quite get. If you do the assignment and show thought and effort, you get the full point(s). We will also frequently do written reflections in class, some of which will be submitted at that time.

Attendance and Participation: It's hard to succeed if you don't show up. And you wouldn't be here at college if you could learn everything on your own. So come to class! Class is where we deepen our understanding of the ideas we're learning by review, discussion, and practice. Participation is necessary for learning in this class. We'll have opportunities for in-class participation as well as online participation. **Participation in the writing workshops is mandatory.**

If you can't make it to class, check the Sakai site for information on what was covered or talk to a classmate. If you miss more than nine days of class, you'll fail the course. If you're really, really sick or are facing some serious challenges or emergencies that may cause you to miss more than one day of class in a row, please get in touch with me – the earlier the better.

Learning Outcomes

The course has been designed with nine learning outcomes, below. Over the course of the semester we will practice writing to achieve these outcomes, and you will have opportunities to reflect on how you have met them. We will talk more in class about what these outcomes mean.

1. Understanding of Rhetorical Situation
 - a. Students recognize that different rhetorical situations (audiences, purposes, contexts) call for different types of writing.
 - b. Students practice different types of writing appropriate to different rhetorical situations (audience, purposes, contexts).
 - c. Students reflect upon and explain the appropriateness of their choices for the rhetorical situation.
2. Composition Processes and Practices
 - a. Students recognize differences between revision and editing.
 - b. Students practice various methods of invention, collaboration, research, ethical incorporation of sources, peer review, and revision.
 - c. Students describe and analyze their different methods of invention, collaboration, research, ethical incorporation of sources, peer review, and revision.
3. Conventions and Craft
 - a. Students recognize standards of correctness, usage, and style.
 - b. Students practice a range of styles, registers, and conventions.
 - c. Students revise and edit their work to produce polished texts that meet the demands of the rhetorical situation.

Required Texts [In brackets are the abbreviations used in schedules]

Glenn, *The Harbrace Guide to Writing* (URI edition/Cengage, 2013) [HGW]

Bullock and Weinberg, *The Little Seagull Handbook* (2nd edition, Norton, 2014) [LSH]

Reynolds and Davis, *Portfolio Keeping*, (3rd edition, Bedford St. Martin's, 2013) [PK]

Mandatory Requirements (i.e., What You Must Do to Pass)

- Completion of all projects or other assignments on due dates
- Completion of a final portfolio that follows all guidelines
- Active and consistent participation in class and collaborative work
- Preparation for each class and helpful contributions to class discussion
- Regular attendance and communication with instructor

Sakai and E-mail**Meeting with the Instructor**

Semester Schedule**

Week	Dates	Topics	Major Deadlines & Important Dates
1	9/10	Welcome and syllabus	Get copies of textbooks
2	9/15 9/17	Intro to memoir project Writing as a process	
3	9/22 9/24	Writing workshop Portfolio. Our communities.	D1 Memoir due
4	9/29 10/1	Writing workshop Intro to argument project & topic	D2 Memoir due
5	10/6 10/8	Library visit – Searching for sources Rhetorical contexts & appeals	Library visit
6	10/13 10/15	Analyzing arguments & Elements Choosing and evaluating sources.	
7	10/20 10/22	Using sources. Citing sources. Writing workshop	D1 Argument due
8	10/27 10/29	Format, register, conventions. Writing workshop	
9	11/3 11/5	Argument reflection and intro to Profile Profile elements and interview questions	D2 Argument due
10	11/10 11/12	Profile development strategies Writing Workshop	D1 Profile due
11	11/17 11/19	Proposals and group projects Elements of proposal	D2 Profile due
12	11/24 11/26	No class – Conferencing No class – Thanksgiving	No class – Meet with instructor No class
13	12/1 12/3	Group presentation Reflection and group evaluations	Group project due
14	12/8 12/10	IDEA/Evaluations and discussions No class – Conferencing	No class – Meet with instructor
15	12/18	No class	Portfolio due on Sakai

**Schedule may change slightly over the course of the semester. Up-to-date information will be available on Sakai. You are responsible for checking Sakai to make sure you have the most current information.

Assignment 1

WRT 104 – A. Jones Daly

Project 4: Group Proposal

First Thoughts

The objective of a proposal is to effect a change. Proposals suggest an action to be taken and rely on persuasion to convince the audience that the suggested course of action is the best action to take. Common forms of proposals are petitions, product pitches, project proposals, and grant proposals. The last two are very common and share some general elements:

- Identify a problem and explain its significance.
- Recommend an action to address the problem and support the recommendation with evidence.
- Provide the steps to take action, the costs and benefits of the action, and the necessary resources.
- Acknowledge and defend against objections or counter-arguments.

This Assignment

Just like in any other large community, University of Rhode Island students often face challenges that might go unresolved. The Student Senate, in conjunction with administration, wants to resolve some of these challenges and is hosting a pitch session for students to propose projects addressing community issues. The Senate has a maximum of \$26,000 to spend on the projects that members see as valuable and feasible. You and your teammates have identified an issue within our local community that needs to be addressed and you have some ideas of how to address it. Therefore, you are writing a proposal to offer your identified solution and persuade the Senate and administration to act on it and support it.

Proposal of the Proposal (10%)

The proposal of the proposal is written to me (Ms. Daly). This document outlines the direction that your team is taking in the project and describes the issue as a rhetorical situation and your response to it. The goal of this document is to convince me that you are planning the most fitting response possible. Use the worksheet provided in class to guide the writing of this proposal of the proposal, but make sure to format it as a proposal (*not* as a list of responses). Keep in mind the following guidelines:

- One page or less, single-spaced
- Describe the rhetorical situation, how your proposal responds to that, and the actions your team will take to write this proposal
- Format it as a proposal, using headings and other document design techniques and appropriate tone and vocabulary

Presentation (40%)

Instead of a writing workshop, your team will present your proposal to the Student Senate (i.e., your classmates) in a high-stakes, “Shark Tank” like pitch session. Your goal is to earn as much money to finance your proposed project. Here are some guidelines for the presentation:

- No longer than 5 minutes
- Visuals welcome, but not required
- Have 20 copies of the executive summary for everyone in the audience
- Not everyone in the team must present, but everyone will share the presentation grade

Executive Summary (40%)

Executive summaries are commonly used in business settings to provide a synopsis of the key ideas of a report. Your group will create an executive summary that will be shared with me and with the investors on Presentation Day. Consider the following guidelines when creating the summary:

- One page or less, single-spaced
- Easy-to-read and appealing design
- Hits all major points and includes enough information for investors to grasp context, purpose, and significance
- Includes a title and names of all team members

Reflection – Journal #9 (10%)

Unlike the rest of the project, Journal #9 is an individual endeavor. You will reflect on what it means to write collaboratively and plan a proposal and presentation using the rhetorical concepts we've discussed this semester. Your reflection should be at least 2 pages long (handwritten, or double-spaced typed). Here are some questions to guide your reflection, but I encourage you to develop your ideas beyond these:

- Have you written a proposal before? Have you given a presentation before? Was this experience different from those projects? How?
- How did thinking about writing rhetorically influence you and your team in planning and writing your project and presentation? What can you take from this project to apply to future projects?
- What was your experience working on a writing project as part of a team? What can you take from this experience to apply in future collaborative work?

Evaluation Criteria

A strong proposal will

- describe the problem and its significance clearly and provide a balanced, well-researched understanding of its context;
- offer a clear, reasonable solution and provide the necessary details (resources, people, time, etc.) to help the audience make a decision;
- use ethos, pathos, logos, and kairos to appeal to the audience;
- be well-designed and formatted; and
- use tone and vocabulary appropriate for the audience, and express ideas with well-formed sentences and good grammar

Elements and Deadlines

Proposal of the Proposal (E-mail to Ms. Daly)	November 23
Team conference with Ms. Daly	November 24
Thanksgiving Break (No class)	November 26
Pitch Day – Presentation and Executive Summary	December 1
Journal #9	December 1
(Profile Final Version, Notes, and Journal #8)	(December 3)