

English 1302

Writing Argument or Critical Thinking, Reading, and Writing

Instructor: John Willey

Course Information: English 1302 section 021, 9:30-10:50 T,R, TH 208 and Engl. 1302 section 023, 11:00-12:20 T,R, TH 003.

Office and Hours: Carlisle 411, T, R 8:30-9:20, T 12:30-1:30 or by appointment

Email: jwilley@uta.edu

Phone: Messages only-817-272-2692

Course Description. Critical thinking, reading, and writing are all interrelated activities and critical to learning. We will begin by looking at basic logic and how it is used to build a strong, well defended position. Reading and analyzing a variety of materials will provide an understanding of the topic/position, and make defending a position on that data easy. Close reading leading to deeper analysis will provide expanded paths for your research in order to develop and defend the position you take. We will be doing quite a bit of this analysis in class and considering it as a group. I welcome lively discussion but there will be no personal attacks or pointless arguments. I do not like to lecture, so if you are looking for a class to sit and do nothing in, you will be happier with another instructor. As a side benefit, you learn more by participating. I really am interested in what you have to say and have yet not been taught a different view of the readings by my students every semester.

The writing part of the class falls into two categories. Preparation and product.. Preparation includes developing an idea, researching it, and focusing and organizing your data into a position. The product is the final draft. We will look at ways to make that product polished and convincing including workshopping, class discussion, and conferences. I bring in techniques from fiction writing and journalism as well as traditional academic writing dogma to produce a stronger argument. Academic writing should be clear and concise (journalism) yet it does not have to be dull (fiction techniques).

When you come to class, be prepared to participate. **Be ready to teach.** Come with necessary books, etc. Turn off all cell phones—I **reserve the right to answer any ringing phone in my classroom.** Likewise, personal business is done outside of my classroom.

Required Texts. *Everything's an Argument* by Andrea A. Lunsford, John J. Ruszkiewicz, and Keith Walters

A Writer's Reference by Diana Hacker (If you have another writer's handbook it may work--check with me but MLA changed their format last year so it will have to be a new edition.)

Recommended. A dictionary and a thesaurus small enough to carry with you, especially when you're not writing on a computer connected to the internet.

Other Stuff. This is a writing class so come prepared to write. You will need a pen and lined paper NOT torn from a spiral notebook. I strongly recommend a personal journal for keeping track of stray epiphanies and other odd thoughts pertaining to classes but don't require one.

ALL papers will be in Times New Roman 12 point type, double spaced, with one (1) inch margins. Major papers must be in MLA format and include a Works Cited page (If necessary) and proper citations in the body of the text. There is an exception, however.

Many of you are in courses of study that use other formats such as CMS, APA, or CSE. I will be happy to accept papers in any legitimate, recognized format as long as you let me know in advance you will be using another format and tell me which one. You may as well work within the format your chosen field of study requires. **Not working in a recognized format will get you an automatic Z grade.** I know this sounds harsh but you will find that most of your instructors throughout your college career expect this formatted writing and will subtract points for anything else.

Grades. Your final grade will be based on five formal essays including your drafts and notes, in-class writing, and attendance and participation. Grades in First year Composition (FYC) are A, B, C, F, and Z. The Z grade is reserved for students who do the work but whose writing is not good enough to earn a passing grade. This judgment is made by the instructor and not necessarily based on a number or average. The grade is intended to reward good effort. The Z grade does not affect your GPA and you may repeat the course and pass. A grade of F does affect your GPA and is given for lack of attendance, lack of participation, or lack of effort. Turning in shoddy papers will not guarantee a Z. **Failure to turn in all five major papers will result in an automatic grade of F for the course.**

Major Projects. When you turn in your major projects I will need ALL of your notes, thoughts, peer comments, and related material. Get a **two pocket folder** to turn in papers and their drafts, notes, etc. Not all of these materials will receive a grade but they show me what you are thinking and how you arrived at your final draft. The research, developing, and writing process is very important to this class. **Failure to participate with your writing group and/or not turning in drafts and peer comments will result in a Z grade for the paper.** You should also keep these materials on disk in case of computer problems.

Revisions/Rewrites. You may revise four of the five major essay projects of the semester to improve your grade. The final draft of the final project will be turned in too late for revisions, however we will spend extra class time workshoping the Position Paper.. To work on a rewrite for the other essays, you need to talk with me **within two class periods** from the return date of the work in question. We will work out a schedule

of due dates on your rewritten drafts. I will be happy to work with you on rewrites but understand they will not go on until you have a satisfactory grade—this course is a measure of your ability, not mine. **Failure to turn in ALL FIVE MAJOR ESSAY PROJECTS will result in a grade of F for the course.**

Conferences. You will need to schedule at least two conferences with me to work on your projects. This does not include catching me after class to ask about your grade. They are a part of your attendance grade. You will need to prepare for these but don't worry yet—we will discuss them in class and when you schedule them.

Late Assignments. Major assignments turned in late will be penalized a letter grade for each day they are late unless you contact me and discuss the reasons for lateness **before the assignment is due. Daily assignments will not be accepted late.**

Drafts of essay projects are due as scheduled. Failure to produce a draft to work on by the due date will result in a point deduction on your final essay grade. **No work will be accepted after the last class day (Dec. 3 this semester).**

Grade distribution is as follows:

Attendance and Participation	10%
Daily Assignments/Workshopping	20%
Essay Projects:	70%:
Proposal for Major Project	10%
Exploratory Paper	20%
Final Position Paper	25%
Toulmin Exercise	5%
Blade Runner Paper	10%

The grade for **attendance** should be obvious—if you're here and doing the work in class you get the credit. If you are not here or not participating you don't get credit. Peer work and **workshopping** are reflective of your work with your writing group. We will discuss the writing groups in class but they are a valuable tool in the writing process. They will be part of your daily work. **Daily assignments** should also be obvious.

You will note a number of “Short analytical papers” in the syllabus. These should be around 300-500 words or one to two pages in length (more is acceptable). They are due at the BEGINNING of the class for which they are assigned.

The five major essay projects will be the largest part of your grade.

The five major papers will include a **proposal** outlining your topic and how you will approach it, an **exploratory** paper quite literally exploring the topic you proposed, and a **final position paper** on that same subject. The **Toulmin exercise** will be on a subject of your choice and will demonstrate your understanding of the elements of argument. The *Blade Runner* paper will be an analysis of the themes and argument presented in the movie including exploring the lighting and sets as an introduction to visual media.

Your Proposal essay should be between 900 and 1200 words or 3 to 4 pages. The Exploratory paper will be longer—minimum of 2000 words. The Final Position paper will be 3000 words or more. Please note that these are **all on the same topic**—if you decide to change topics you will need to write a new Proposal and go from there. Also: I have veto power on your topic. There will be no "hot button" topics—they are too

difficult to research properly in part of a semester.

The length of the Toulmin Exercise will be 600 to 1200 words but is, to some extent, flexible but only with prior permission. the *Blade Runner* paper should run around 1200 words. One page takes around 300 words.

Attendance. This class is essentially a workshop and discussion group. That makes your classmates partners in the planning and writing assignments of this class. The class is a community with each member responsible to the others for the exchange of ideas leading to successful completion of papers. You will be allowed four absences. After that I will deduct five points from your attendance grade for each absence. Chronic tardiness is, likewise, unacceptable. Come on time and prepared to work—you may find you enjoy the class.

Learning Outcomes. In ENGL 1302, students build on the knowledge and information that they learned in ENGL 1301. By the end of ENGL 1302, students should be able to:

Rhetorical Knowledge

Identify and analyze the components and complexities of a rhetorical situation

Use knowledge of audience, purpose, genre, format, structure, tone, diction, and syntax to produce situation-appropriate argumentative texts, including texts that move beyond formulaic structures

Know and use terminology for analyzing and producing arguments

Critical Reading, Thinking, and Writing

Integrate personal experiences, values, and beliefs into larger social conversations and contexts

Analyze the rhetorical appeals of written discourse

Find, evaluate, and analyze primary and secondary sources for appropriateness, timeliness, and validity

Produce situation-appropriate argumentative texts with a focus, thesis, and controlling idea, and identify those elements in others' texts

Incorporate source material in their argumentative writing, synthesizing sources with their own ideas

Provide valid, reliable, and appropriate support for claims

Processes

Use and develop flexible strategies for generating, revising, and editing complex argumentative texts

Conduct ethical research as appropriate to a particular rhetorical task

Practice writing as a recursive process that can lead to substantive changes in ideas, structure, and supporting evidence through multiple revisions

Utilize the collaborative and social aspects of writing processes to critique their own and others' works

Conventions

Apply and develop knowledge of genre conventions ranging from structure and paragraphing to tone and mechanics

Summarize, paraphrase, and quote from sources using appropriate documentation style

Revise for style and edit for features such as syntax, grammar, punctuation, and spelling
Employ technologies to format texts according to appropriate stylistic conventions.

Drop Policy. If you choose to withdraw from this course, you must follow university procedures. It is your responsibility to execute these procedures correctly, and within the university's dates and guidelines. You are not dropped automatically if you stop attending class. **Please, if you are not going to complete the course, drop it and save yourself an "F."**

Resources. Besides, and located in our excellent library, we have the **Writing Center**, located on the fourth floor (room 411) of the Central Library. Tutorial help is available by appointment or on a walk-in basis. Appointments are recommended, Schedule via the web at www.uta.edu/owl/appointments. The tutors are thoroughly trained to assist you in FYC and beyond. They do not serve as an editorial service, a rewrite service, or a research service. They can, however, help and guide you in these areas. Go prepared. Have your draft and questions in order when you go. Allow time to work with their staff. They can help you with everything from basic grammar to papers for advanced classes. You have paid for the service as part of your fees. Keep the Center in mind—they can help you from your first year through graduate school here at UTA. Fall hours are 9:00 AM to 7:00 PM Monday through Thursday, 9:00 AM to 4:00 PM Friday, and 2:00 PM to 6:00 PM Saturday and Sunday. It is best to schedule and appointment but they will take walk-ins on a first come-first served basis.

e-Culture.

We will use WebCT in the course which will get all of us on the **E** trail. Subjects will change weekly on the **discussion board** and you need to read and weigh in on them. Read your classmates' comments and start a discussion. **This is part of your grade.** You will also find a copy of the syllabus in WebCT and occasional announcements so check in several times a week.

I do not teach web site design but we will deal with visual images sometime during the semester with the idea that the results might work on the web. That means telling the story with words and pictures. Keep an eye out for hard hitting pictures.

Other visual media: We will watch and analyze at least one movie during this course. This semester it will be *Blade Runner*. It is an action Sci-Fi but also a film exploring several powerful themes that were new in the 1960's when *Do Androids Dream of Electric Sheep* (the book it is based on) was written. They are within a probable reality today and well worth considering. The total audio-visual experience will serve as an introduction to other forms of visual media all of which we will analyze.

Most of the readings outside the text will be supplied as handouts or as a web address. If they are available on the web you will need to print them out to bring to class.

Americans with Disabilities Act. The University of Texas at Arlington is on record as being committed to both the spirit and letter of federal equal opportunity legislation; reference Public Law 92-112- The Rehabilitation Act of 1973 as amended. With the passage of federal legislation entitled Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), pursuant

to section 594 of the Rehabilitation Act, there is renewed focus on providing this population with the same opportunities enjoyed by all citizens. As a faculty member, I am required by law to provide “reasonable accommodations” to students with disabilities, so as not to discriminate on the basis of that disability. Student responsibility primarily rests with informing faculty of their need for accommodation and in providing authorized documentation through designated administrative channels. Information regarding specific diagnostic criteria and policies for obtaining academic accommodations can be found at www.uta.edu/disability. Also, you may visit the Office for Students with Disabilities in room 102 of University or call them at (817) 272-3364.

Academic Dishonesty and Plagiarism. It is the philosophy of The University of Texas at Arlington that academic dishonesty is a completely unacceptable mode of conduct and will not be tolerated in any form. All persons involved in academic dishonesty will be disciplined in accordance with University regulations and procedures. Discipline may include suspension or expulsion from the University. “Scholastic dishonesty includes but is not limited to cheating, plagiarism, collusion, the submission for credit of any work or materials that are attributable in whole or in part to another person, taking an examination for another person, any act designed to give unfair advantage to a student or the attempt to commit such acts.” (Regents’ Rules and Regulations, Series 50101, Section 2.2) You can get in trouble for plagiarism—even if you do not intend to cheat—by failing to correctly indicate places where you are making use of the work of another. It is your responsibility to familiarize yourself with the conventions of citation by which you indicate which ideas are not your own, and how your reader can find those sources. Read your handbook for more information on quoting and citing properly to avoid plagiarism. If you still do not understand, ask your instructor.

That is the official university policy. I, also, take plagiarism very seriously. **It results in an automatic "F" on the paper and forfeiture of the right to rewrite the paper.** I assure you it is relatively easy for those of us who read papers regularly to spot plagiarism. Please refrain from attempting it. It is theft, pure and simple.

Disruptive Student Conduct According to *Student Conduct and Discipline*, “students are prohibited from engaging in or attempting to engage in conduct, either alone or in concert with others, that is intended to obstruct, disrupt, or interfere with, or that in fact obstructs, disrupts, or interferes with any instructional, educational, research, administrative, or public performance or other activity authorized to be conducted in or on a University facility. Obstruction or disruption includes, but is not limited to, any act that interrupts, modifies, or damages utility service or equipment, communication service or equipment, or computer equipment, software, or networks” (UTA Handbook of Operating Procedures, Ch 2, Sec. 2-202).

Student Success Programs. The University of Texas at Arlington supports a variety of student success programs to help you connect with the University and achieve academic success. These programs include learning assistance, developmental education, advising, and mentoring, admission and transition, and federally funded programs. Students requiring assistance academically, personally, or socially should contact the office of Student Success Programs at 817-272-6107 for more information and appropriate

referrals.

Final Thoughts. I feel that this class is a tool to help you in your academic career rather than an end in itself. If you feel we need to add something to the class, please speak up. I run what is called a "student centered classroom." That means I listen to you and encourage you to make the class work. If something important happens in the world we may spend the next class analyzing it. I try not to teach in a vacuum or limit the class to the text so expect current events to crop up as part of the class. I also insist on honest analysis. That means having to research and understand the OTHER side of an argument. I expect you to look at sides of an issue you don't agree with and understand them. This is what critical thinking is all about. You may find a reason to change your position if you do this. I also like to have a good time in class but this does not mean not learning or losing focus. Finally, I expect you to teach me something this semester. None of us has all the answers.

Course Calendar

THE FINE PRINT: I will try to adhere to this schedule but there may be reason or reasons to alter it. If you miss class check the schedule and ask a classmate if there was a change made. This is your responsibility. You will need access to a computer. UTA has something like ten computer labs and you can borrow a laptop from the library so there are many options besides having your own.

Please Note: I have not typed out "Write A Short Paper" on every reading and exercise but you are required to turn in a paper or reading notes on all readings. These do not need to be formal but do have to show me you have read and at least tried to understand the reading. I require one to two pages on each of these readings due at the beginning of the class for which they are assigned.

EA=Everything's An Argument

WR=A Writer's Reference

AUG

T 25 Introductions and a look at the syllabus. An overview of the course and what it is all about and why.

NC (Next Class) Read the Vonnegut essay, write a short paper on it, and come prepared to discuss it.

Th 27 Discuss logic, language, and critical thinking along with basic academic writing principles. **Intro to Proposal and how it works with Exploratory and Position Papers.**

SEPT

T 1 Discuss the beginnings of logic—the syllogism along with ethos, pathos, logos and related. Exercise in logic. Intro to Toulmin.

Th 3 Discuss Toulmin—like and unlike the syllogism. In class exercise on building a Toulmin argument.

NC Write a paper (three pages approx.) using **ALL** parts of the Toulmin Model. You can make any argument you wish as long as it uses Toulmin. **Label the parts.**

T 8 Review Syllogisms, Toulmin, and logic. A look at the *Declaration of Independence* for logical style and general writing style. A look at fallacies.

NC Read Ch 5 in EA and write a short paper on it. **You will also need to give me a paragraph or so outlining your topic for the semester.** Don't get fancy but do be specific and focused.

Th 10 Discuss rhetorical thinking and how it shapes your arguments.

NC Read Ch 6 in EA and write a short analysis—note particularly the Dershowitz essay and its analysis. How did the Dershowitz piece strike you?

T 15 We will meet in Ransom Hall 210 for a seminar on Evaluating and Documenting Sources and searching specialized data bases.

Th 17 We will meet in Ransom 210 for Researching Controversial Issues and finding specialized data bases.

T 22 **Proposal Due.** Discuss structure and its importance. Classical structure vs other forms. A close look at Dershowitz. Note the flexibility of form illustrated by Dershowitz but also consider its dangers.

NC Read Ch 9 in EA and write a short analysis. Find an argument (this can be an ad, news article, or???) that is questionable in its structure and another that is not questionable. Be prepared to present your findings.

Th 24 Discuss evaluation. Look at the material presented and discuss it. A few minutes on MLA or ? and **plagiarism**.

NC Read Ch 7 in EA and wsa. Read and comment on the Suzuki handout.

T 29 **Intro to Exploratory**. Discuss arguments of fact. A look at Suzuki's essay.

NC Read Ch 8 in EA and wsa. Read and comment on the Rose essay.

OCT

Th 1 Discuss arguments of definition. A close look at Rose's essay.

NC Read Ch 10 in EA and wsa. Find a causal argument (or write-summarize one) make some notes and be prepared to present it.

T 6 Discuss causal arguments. A look at specific causal arguments.

NC Read Ch 12 and wsa. Read the Abbey handout and write up your notes.

Th 8 Discuss style in arguments. A close look at Abbey's essay—what might be done to change it for the better? Anything?

NC Read Ch 14 in EA and wsa. Bring in at least two visual arguments—one should be effective the other not so effective—be prepared to explain.

T 13 Discuss visual argument—its power and its problems. How to analyze the total experience—look to pathos and other feelings. Who, What, etc.

Th 15 Watch and analyze a short piece of visual media. You will be surprised. Write a short analysis in class.

NC Read Ch 13 and wsa. Read the O'Roarke essay and make notes.

T 20 Discuss the use of humor in argument. A note on satire. A close look at the O'Rourke essay.

NC Read the Jonathon Swift essay and write up your notes. Find another use of satire in argument and be prepared to present it. Read Ch 12 and wsa.

Th 22 More on humor and especially satire in argument. A look at style in presenting an argument—sarcasm, satire, and other different but effective bits.

NC Be ready for Exploratory workshop.

T 27 **First Draft of Exploratory Due**. Workshop Exploratory. Be sure to bring in at least three copies for workshopping.

NC Read Chs 18 and 19 in EA. Make up a list of questions you may have concerning the chapters specific to your papers.

Th 29 A review of format and its importance, how to present arguments, how to document evidence, and, naturally, what constitutes good evidence.

NC Get you Exploratory ready.

NOV

T 3 Final workshop on Exploratory. Be sure to bring at least three copies.

NC Polish your final draft.

Th 5 **Final Draft of Exploratory Due.** Intro to **Position Paper.** Intro to *Blade Runner*.

T 10 Watch *Blade Runner*. Take notes.

Th 12 Discuss the movie and its implications.

NC Write up your analysis of *Blade Runner*. Be sure to back up your analysis with specific scenes from the movie. Feel free to do a bit of research—you will be surprised—there is a growing body of scholarly material on the flick. Read Ch. 17.

T 17 Recognizing and dealing with fallacies in research and writing.

NC Read the Mill essay and decide what style and approach Mill uses—write up your thoughts and be prepared to present them to the class.

Th 19 Discuss Mill and his approach. Last minute paper questions.

NC Workshop on Position paper—bring three copies.

T 24 Workshop Position Paper—bring three copies.

Th 26 Thanksgiving

DEC

T 1 Workshop Position papers—as usual, three copies are necessary.

Th 3 **Position Paper Due**

THE END