

# RWS 100: THE RHETORIC OF WRITTEN ARGUMENT Fall 2006

section 68, T/Th 8:00-9:15, BAM 442

## Course Theme: *Researching Identities*

**Instructor:** Colin Leath

**Office Hours:** Wednesday 3:30-4:30 in ESC (Extended Studies Center) 301F, and by appointment.

**Phone:** 619 594 2015 (during office hours)

**Mailbox:** in the DRWS office, ESC 303, open 7:30-4:30. MC 4452.

**Email:** cleath@j9k.org

## WHAT IS THE COURSE ABOUT?

*Rhetoric* refers to the study, uses, and effects of written, spoken, and visual language.

RWS (Rhetoric and Writing Studies) 100 is an introduction to reading, writing, and critical thinking designed to help you successfully undertake university-level work. You will write and revise papers in which you address arguments, use source materials, and make decisions about structure, cohesion, and usage.

“This isn’t an argument.” “Yes, it is.” “No, it isn’t.” “Yes, it is.” “No, it isn’t.” “Yes, it is.” —Monty Python

## WHAT ARE THE COURSE OBJECTIVES?

There are four main projects in this course.

1. In Paper One, you construct an account of an argument;
2. In Paper Two, you analyze an argument, incorporating research that enriches your understanding of the argument;
3. In Paper Three, you explain two authors’ arguments and their rhetorical strategies;
4. In Paper Four, you use concepts from one argument as a framework for interpreting another.

In addition, you develop your reading and writing by demonstrating ability to:

5. describe elements of an argument;
6. use all aspects of the writing process;
7. choose effective structure for your writing;
8. identify and use devices that aid the reader;
9. select, contextualize, and comment on excerpts of arguments;
10. explore the relationship of a text to its context;
11. use writing to respond to ideas and to clarify arguments;
12. analyze visual arguments;
13. edit for context-appropriate grammar and usage;

14. express how important an argument is and why;
15. reflect on your writing process and revise arguments.

## WHAT ARE THE COURSE TEXTS?

Hartfield, Ronne. Another Way Home: The Tangled Roots of Race in One Chicago Family. Chicago: U of Chicago P, 2004.

Raimes, Ann. Keys for Writers. 4th ed. Boston: Houghton-Mifflin, 2005.

Miller, Richard E. and Kurt Spellmeyer, Eds. The New Humanities Reader. 2nd ed. Boston: Houghton-Mifflin, 2006.

In addition, a college-level dictionary (such as The American Heritage College Dictionary) is **highly recommended**.

You might prefer electronic dictionaries, such as Random House Webster’s Unabridged Dictionary (<<http://www.learnaid.com/ranhouswebun2.html>> \$7) for the PC, and Mi:D for the Palm.

## WHAT ARE OUR READINGS?

You discuss and write papers about the following texts in this order:

1. the selections from Beth Loffreda in Reader (309-33);
2. the book by Ronne Hartfield and the related sources. The sources are listed in the “Researching Identities Assignment Sequence” available on Blackboard.
3. the selections from Jon Krakauer (285-308) and the essay by Oliver Sacks (473-92);
4. the essays by James C. Scott (520-36) and Lila Abu-Lughod (25-54).

You also respond to student texts in class activities and Blackboard posts.

Bring all texts under investigation to class!

Good writers are also good readers—of their own and others’ texts.

## HOW IS WORK IN THIS CLASS GRADED?

### We use Project Portfolios:

Because formal writing consists of a process cycle of reading, analysis, discussion, collaboration, drafting, re-drafting, and refining the final product before submission, in this introductory-level class you are asked to submit evidence of this preparatory process in the form of a Project Portfolio along with the final draft of your paper.

You are thus responsible for collecting all completed process work such as assignments, outlines, drafts, etc., and re-submitting the respective process evidence with your final draft of each Project.

No make-up work is allowed in Project Portfolios. Only work already submitted in a timely fashion on the original due date and initialed or commented on by me may be submitted as evidence of completed process work. Occasionally, I may ask you to participate in a Discussion Board Activity or complete a brief Survey on Blackboard. If such a discussion or survey is assigned, completing it will count as a Portfolio item for that respective Portfolio. The Portfolio for Project Four will include a metacognitive reflection written in class on the day of the final.

Your grade on each of the four course Projects will be based not only on the quality of the final draft of your project, but also on evidence of the process that led to the culminating product. The final draft of your paper counts for 80% of each Project Portfolio grade, the Process Materials for 20%.

Because awareness of reader needs and expectations is an important aspect of academic writing, draft feedback from readers is considered essential to the development of the final academic product. Therefore, completion of drafts and attendance at in-class draft workshops and individual draft conferences is a required component counted into the 20% of the Project Portfolio grade.

**Final drafts** are graded on the following scale:

4	Outstanding achievement
3	Praiseworthy performance
2	Satisfactory performance
1	Minimally passing
0	Failing

**Process materials** may also be graded on the following simpler scale:

+	4	Outstanding achievement
✓	3	Satisfactory or Praiseworthy
0	0	No credit

Process materials are weighted according to the complexity of the assignment. For example, a Draft could be worth three times a Reading Response.

**Project Portfolio** grades are calculated in the following way:

Final draft of paper = 80%  
Process materials = 20%

**Example:**

Paper grade =  $3 \times 0.80 = 2.4$   
Process Materials grade =  $3 \times 0.20 = 0.6$   
Project Portfolio grade = 3.0

The four Project Portfolios are weighted differently:  
Project One: 18% of Final Grade  
Project Two: 22% of Final Grade  
Project Three: 28% of Final Grade

Project Four: 32% of Final Grade

**Detailed assignment schedules for each Project will be posted on Blackboard.**

The final letter grade for the course is reported according to the following scale (“>” means *greater than*):

A > 3.7	B+ > 3.0	C+ > 2.0	C- > 1.3
A- > 3.3	B > 2.7	C > 1.7	D >= 1.0
			F < 1.0

**WHAT ARE THE CLASSROOM POLICIES & PROCEDURES?**

**Courtesy:** I do expect that this classroom will be the site of lively intellectual activity, which is not the sound of one voice (mine), but rather your voices as you challenge your own beliefs, encounter new ideas, question our texts, take a risk, welcome new points of view, and – always – contribute respectfully and thoughtfully.

**Blackboard:** I will use Blackboard to post course documents and other information. I also ask that you use this site for collaborative work or questions for the class to consider. Please note: subscription is automatic and uses the email address you have filed in the Registrar’s Office / SDSU WebPortal.

**Electronics only for classroom purposes:** Please turn off cell phones, IM, iPods, etc. during class. Computers may be used for classwork and note taking.

**Work load:** Time spent on classwork and homework should add up to, on average, nine hours per week (SDSU General Catalog 2006-2007 462).

**Attendance:** Work missed due to lateness or absence that I am not notified about in advance cannot be made up—you receive zeros in those cases. It is best to be in or near the classroom before the class starts.

**Assignment due dates:** All assignments must be submitted within the first five minutes of the class period on the date they are due. Late work will not be accepted unless arrangements have been made with me prior to the due date.

**Plagiarism:** Do your own work, and cite others’ work correctly. Pages 116-28 in Keys for Writers discuss how to avoid plagiarism. Plagiarized assignments recognized as such earn a zero and are reported to the Center for Student Rights and Responsibilities.

**Special needs:** If you have special learning needs or are registered with Disabled Student Services, please let me know as soon as possible so that I can work with you to accommodate your needs.

**Problems:** If you run into problems or

emergencies, talk to me as soon as possible.

**Absences due to religious observances and University events:** On or before the fourth day of class, inform me of the classes you will miss due to religious holidays or because you are a student athlete.

“Writing causes one to need to clarify information,” to put ideas into relationships, and “to explore reasons for saying what one has decided to say.” —John Gage

**WHEN ARE THINGS DUE?** (subject to change)

The due dates of assignments and readings will be scheduled as we go.

1	Tu. Aug. 29	Introduction
	Th. Aug. 31	
2	Tu. Sep. 5	
	Th. Sep. 7	
3	Tu. Sep. 12	
	Th. Sep. 14	Draft 1
4	Tu. Sep. 19	
	Th. Sep. 21	Revision 1
5	Tu. Sep. 26	
	Th. Sep. 28	
6	Tu. Oct. 3	
	Th. Oct. 5	
7	Tu. Oct. 10	
	Th. Oct. 12	Draft 2
8	Tu. Oct. 17	
	Th. Oct. 19	Revision 2
9	Tu. Oct. 24	
	Th. Oct. 26	
10	Tu. Oct. 31	
	Th. Nov. 2	
11	Tu. Nov. 7	Draft 3
	Th. Nov. 9	
12	Tu. Nov. 14	Revision 3
	Th. Nov. 16	
13	Tu. Nov. 21	
	Th. Nov. 23	Holiday
14	Tu. Nov. 28	
	Th. Nov. 30	Draft 4
15	Tu. Dec. 5	
	Th. Dec. 7	Revision 4
16	Tu. Dec. 12	0800-1000 Final Reflection