



WR 13100-26

MWF 9:25 to 10:15

230 Coleman-Morse Center

INSTRUCTOR

Anton Povzner

apovzner@nd.edu

OFFICE HOURS

MT 2:00 to 3:00

(or by appointment)

300 O'Shaughnessy Hall

COURSE GOALS

- To develop an understanding of communication as a social, rhetorical, and ethical activity
- To improve your writing abilities through practicing writing in various forms, including revision and collaborative work
- To familiarize you with research as a process of analysis and discovery within a scholarly conversation that will continue to aid you beyond this class
- To maintain the classroom as a supportive and open space where we can share our questions and respond to others' in a spirit of inquisitiveness with no obligation to demonstrate mastery of the right answer

Writing & Rhetoric: Writing as Social Action

COURSE DESCRIPTION

Writing is all too often treated as a simple transmission of information or filling in a template; an argument is seen as a confrontation between set positions. Pursuing a more nuanced view, we will adopt a rhetorical vocabulary to approach writing as a deliberate activity in a social context. Arguments are launched from concrete positions, addressing particular audiences in pursuit of certain goals, which will rarely be limited to proving the other person wrong.

We will use this understanding to both write and read a variety of texts. In reading, we will be particularly concerned with writers' means of persuasion both pragmatically and ethically, thinking about virtues such as knowledge, judgment, and intellectual courage. As we do that, we will examine our own position as readers: how do we negotiate disagreement, and how do we maintain a critical attitude towards texts that we want to agree with? How and when do we open our writing and our minds to be changed by another?

Writing will naturally follow on our analysis of others' texts. We will address writing as a process of discovery and growth, developing skills to be used in other writing situations at Notre Dame and beyond. Revision will be central to that process, modeled through instructor feedback as well as peer review sessions, to become an integral part of the writing process. Class participation will be seen as a learning opportunity for both the student speaking and their peers, and thus entail a dual responsibility for thoughtful contribution and respectful listening and response. Assignments will include writing in multiple genres in a multi-stage, inquiry-based process that will allow students to pursue questions that matter to them and ones that they believe should also matter to others.

RESOURCES

Writing Center:

At Notre Dame we are fortunate to have an excellent writing center. All students are required to visit the writing center at least once early in the semester. Of course, I recommend visiting it more than once, and I believe that even the strongest of writers can benefit from its services.

Writing tutors do not write or edit your papers for you. Rather, they help you develop effective rhetorical strategies for your written work. You can find out more about the services offered at the writing center and schedule an appointment at <http://writingcenter.nd.edu>

First Year Librarian:

The Hesburgh Libraries has dedicated a librarian, Melissa Harden, who helps first-year students navigate the vast information resources available through the Hesburgh Libraries and develop research strategies that will maximize the use of those resources. More information about the first-year librarian and her services can be found at: <https://firstyear.nd.edu/resources/academic-support/first-year-librarian/>

Disability Services:

I am committed to working with students to make this course accessible. It is the policy and practice of The University of Notre Dame to provide reasonable accommodations for students with documented disabilities. If you have, or think you may have, a disability, you are encouraged to contact Sara Bea Disability Services at your earliest opportunity for a confidential discussion (<http://sarabeadisabilityservices.nd.edu/>). Once you have done that, please contact me, and we can make the necessary arrangements.

COURSE POLICIES

*Syllabus subject to change; consult Drive folder for current version

Inclusivity:

We share a responsibility to maintain a campus free of discrimination, including any form of harassment. As your instructor, I will strive to create an environment in our classroom that welcomes all people regardless of sex, gender, race, ethnicity, religion, age, ability, or sexual orientation. If you feel this standard of welcome is not being met, please contact me.

Classroom Hospitality:

As your teacher, it is my goal to cultivate a classroom environment that is hospitable to all students and conducive to learning. I ask for your help in fulfilling this goal, as we are all responsible for the climate of our classroom. I ask that you actively listen to other members of our class, respond with civility, and look for instances to be generous and charitable to one another, especially when other students share their writing and ideas. I also encourage you to voice your differences of opinion and experience with one another and with me, even though it may be more comfortable to remain silent. I welcome your suggestions for how to build and maintain a hospitable classroom climate.

Attendance:

To succeed in this course, you will be expected to arrive on time and prepared to engage enthusiastically in class activities and discussions. In addition to excused absences for reasons such as a documented illness, religious holy days, or university-authorized activities, you may miss three classes with no penalty. Each subsequent unexcused absence will cause one third of a letter grade to be deducted from your overall grade (e.g., A- becomes B+). Seven unexcused absences will be grounds for course failure. Library and writing center visits as well as personal conferences are integral to the course and count for attendance. Your ability to benefit from attending the class will be impaired if you arrive late or unprepared, fall asleep, text or otherwise misuse technology, talk inappropriately, or markedly disengage from the learning process in the classroom; these will also damage the classroom environment for others. Such behaviors will count as half an unexcused absence. If you do miss class for any reason, it is your responsibility to keep up with class materials and announcements.

RESOURCES

Mental Health & Well-Being:

College-level study is a stressful and challenging occupation. It is not unusual for students to struggle with their physical, mental, or emotional wellbeing, especially during their first year. This is absolutely nothing to be ashamed of. Please be aware that there are many resources available to support you on campus. The University Counseling Center offers confidential crisis services, walk-in consultations, individual or group counseling sessions, and an Inner Resources Room that assists with stress management. Find out more at <http://ucc.nd.edu>. You can also find support through the McDonald Center for Student Well-Being at <http://mcwell.nd.edu>, or contact a Care Consultant for a broad range of concerns at <http://care.nd.edu>.

Should you find that a special need or hardship is compromising your learning in the course, please be in contact with me. I am glad to refer you to on-campus resources and to discuss ways to accommodate your needs.

Talk to me:

If you have any questions or concerns not discussed in class, do not hesitate to approach me after class, write me an email, or come to talk. You are always welcome to drop by my scheduled office hours without an appointment, but letting me know beforehand will allow me to reserve a time slot for you. I am happy to look at your drafts and any particular challenges you encounter.

Assessment and grading:

Your grade will be weighed towards the later submissions, leaving space for improvement throughout the semester. Further, you are required to revise your first essay and are encouraged to revise the other ones as well; revisions will be due a week from getting your original essay back with my feedback. All major essays are due by 10 PM on the due date; late assignments will lose one third of a letter grade for each day late. In most situations, a short extension without penalty will be possible, provided you contact me at least 48 hours before the assignment is due—barring unforeseeable emergencies, of course. You will save yourself much grief by making a habit of backing up your files. Smaller assignments are due by 10 PM before class unless stated otherwise.

- Major Writing Submissions 70%
 - Narrative 10%; Analysis 15%; Research 25%; Op-Ed 20%
- Participation & Informal Writing: 15%
- Research Process, Presentation, Final Reflection 15%

Academic Honesty:

Plagiarism is completely unacceptable within the academic community and cannot be tolerated in this course. All written work must be your own, and you must make every effort to correctly acknowledge your sources. We will discuss proper citation and use of sources during the semester, and I am always happy to address any concerns or doubts you might have. In all things, we must strive to uphold the Notre Dame Academic Code of Honor, which you can find at <http://honorcode.nd.edu>. If you have any questions about plagiarism or the honor code, please come and speak with me.

Technology:

Computers in various forms have become inseparable from our daily life and study, for better and worse. Ample research as well as common experience show that such technologies can distract and interfere with student performance in class. That said, since you will likely be doing most of your writing on a computer, it will make sense to have it on hand for classroom writing exercises. You are expected to limit technology use to class matters, and failure to do so will reflect on your class attendance score. Smartphones are to be kept silent and out of sight throughout the class period.

ASSIGNMENTS

Informal Writing

To get you into a comfortable habit of writing, you will often be writing short informal passages both as part of class activities and outside of class to be shared in an ongoing conversation.

Narrative Essay

3-4 page essay reflecting on your history of development as a writer.

Rhetorical Analysis

4-5 page essay interrogating a suitable text through the analytical lens learned in the course.

Research Paper

8-10 page research project advancing an argumentative claim related to course themes and engaged in scholarly conversations. The project will be supported through in-class discussions and interim submissions.

Op-ed

3-4 page essay arguing a point for a broad audience, ideally derived from the research paper.

Presentation

5-10 minute in-class presentation based on one of your previous submissions.

Final Reflection

1-2 page essay reflecting on your progression in the course and formulating goals for future development.

SCHEDULE

Date	Material covered	Submissions due / activities
08.28 08.30	Intro; class objectives & expectations; syllabus	
09.02 09.04 09.06	Rhetorical situation	
09.09 09.11 09.13	Rhetorical appeals	Narrative essay; writing center visit #1
09.16 09.18 09.20	Rhetorical fallacies; rhetorical virtues	Narrative essay revision
09.23 09.25 09.27	Rhetorical analysis cont. + workshop	
09.30 10.02 10.04	Group work and peer review; peer review workshop	Rhetorical analysis
10.07 10.09 10.11	Finding a research topic, formulating research questions	Research question; Library visit #1
10.14 10.16 10.18	Working with sources; annotated bibliography	Library visit #2; annotated bibliography
	Mid-term Break	
10.28 10.30 11.01	Structure of research papers; outlines, mind maps	
11.04 11.06 11.08	Claims & evidence; Argument types & counterarguments	Research paper draft; Writing center visit #2
11.11 11.13 11.15	Research papers continued; writing workshop	Research paper
11.18 11.20 11.22	Adjusting for audience; writing exemplars	
11.25 11.27 11.29	Writing workshop (Thanksgiving)	Op-ed paper
12.02 12.04 12.06	Effective presentation strategies; in-class presentations	
12.09 12.11	Presentations	