

Fall 2014
RHE 309: The Rhetoric of Science Writing
Class Policy Statement

Instructor: Hannah Alpert-Abrams
Unique number: 44665
Class Time and Place: T-Th 2-3:30; GEA 114
E-mail: halperta@gmail.com
Course Website: www.halperta.com/ScienceRhetoric
Office: FAC16

Office hours: TBD or by appointment.

Textbooks:

- Graff, G., & Birkenstein, C. (2007) *They Say, I Say*. New York: W. W. Norton and Company.
- Lunsford, A. *Easy Writer*. (2010) Fourth Edition. Boston: Bedford/Martin's.
- Mukherjee, S. *The Best American Science and Nature Writing: 2013*. (2013.) New York: Mariner Books, 2013.

The pace of scientific research today is tremendous, from biology to astronomy, from engineering to medicine. Yet there is a communication gap between the science done in a laboratory and newspaper articles or public policy. In RHE309k – The Rhetoric of Science Writing, we will look at the history of science and at current academic and popular science writing to understand how we talk about scientific truth. We will consider why inaccessible writing sounds truthful and how popular writers use scientific facts to draw unlikely conclusions. We will then look at contemporary science writers who are effective in communicating the importance of new ideas while staying true to scientific rigor in order to identify ways of doing science writing right. Intended for science majors and non-majors alike, this course will give students tools for reading scientific writing critically. At the same time, students in this course will be asked to conduct research and produce original writing, including a scholarly essay and a portfolio of journalistic pieces, so that by the end of the course students will be confident science writers.

You will learn how to

1. identify, evaluate, construct, and organize effective arguments
2. read science writing critically
3. write about scientific research responsibly
4. conduct library and web-based research and document sources
5. produce a clean, efficient style and adapt it to various rhetorical situations
6. edit and proofread your own and others' prose.

Coursework and Grading:

You will be graded on the following assignments this term:

- Oral presentations: 10%
- Research Summaries: 10%

- Essay 1.1: 10%
- Essay 1.2: 10%
- Interview Report: 10%
- Researcher Profile: 10%
- Portfolio drafts: 20%
- Final Portfolio: 20%

Grades:

This class will use the university plus/minus grading scale for assignment and final grades.

A	=	94-100
A-	=	90-93
B+	=	87-89
B	=	84-86
B-	=	80-83
C+	=	77-79
C	=	74-76
C-	=	70-73
D+	=	67-69
D	=	64-66
D-	=	60-63
F	=	0-60

Major Assignments

Students will write and revise one 4-7 page analytic essay. They will write and revise a publishing portfolio containing one interview and three articles. They will also complete a research proposal, an interview proposal, and two short writing assignments.

Emergency Evacuation Guidelines:

Occupants of buildings on The University of Texas at Austin campus are required to evacuate buildings when a fire alarm is activated. Alarm activation or announcement requires exiting and assembling outside. Familiarize yourself with all exit doors of each classroom and building you may occupy. Remember that the nearest exit door may not be the one you used when entering the building. Students requiring assistance in evacuation shall inform their instructor in writing during the first week of class. In the event of an evacuation, follow the instruction of faculty or class instructors. Do not re-enter a building unless given instructions by the following: The University of Texas at Austin Police Department, or Fire Prevention Services office.

Other important Emergency Information: <http://www.utexas.edu/safety/preparedness/>

Behavior Concerns Advice Line: Use this resource to help fellow UT members about which you have concerns BCAL: 232-5050

Helpful Resources

The following websites will be helpful this semester:

DRW - <http://www.drw.utexas.edu/>

UWC - <http://uwc.utexas.edu/>

Blackboard - <https://courses.utexas.edu/webapps/login/>

UT Libraries - <http://www.lib.utexas.edu/>

Late Work: Late work is penalized according to the following scale:

- Up to 24 hours (1 day): -5%
- 24-48 hours (2 days): -30%
- 3-5 days: -10% for each additional day.
- More than 5 days: no credit.

All Research Summaries and Essays must contain the following information. Missing information will be penalized in the following manner:

- Name (upper left corner): 2 points
- Date (upper left corner): 2 points
- Rhetoric 309k (upper left corner): 2 points
- Title: top center: 2 points
- Page numbers: 2 points
- Proper Formatting:
 - RS: 1.5 spaced, Times New Roman or Garamond fonts: 2 points
 - Essay: 1.5 spaced, Times New Roman or Garamond fonts: 2 points
 - Note: essays written in more than one font will receive a 7-point penalty.
- Proper APA Citation:
 - Every submitted paper must have references to be accepted. Missing references result in resubmission, plus a 10% penalty.
 - Research Summary Citation: Above title
 - Essay citation: On “references” page
 - Formatting errors: -1 point for each error
 - Content errors: -3 points for each error

Tardiness: If you arrive late, you are responsible for making sure your attendance is marked. Three cases of extreme tardiness (10 minutes or more) will count as an absence.

Attendance Policy

Rhetoric & Writing has established this attendance policy for all RHE courses. Any questions or appeals concerning this policy must be made directly to the department Associate Chair. You are expected to attend class, to arrive on time, to have prepared assigned reading and writing, and to participate in all in-class editing, revising, and discussion sessions. **Should you miss the equivalent of five class sessions this semester, excused or not, you will fail the course. If you find that an unavoidable problem prevents you from attending class, you should contact your instructor as soon as possible, preferably ahead of time, to let him or her know.**

You will not be penalized for missing class on religious holy days. A student who misses classes or other required activities, including examinations, for the observance of a religious holy day should inform the instructor, in writing, well in advance of the absence, so that alternative arrangements can be made to complete work. If you know you will have to miss class(es) for this reason, provide your instructor with the date(s) as early as possible. Please note that the University specifies very few other excused absences (e.g., jury duty).

When you must miss a class, you are responsible for getting notes and assignments from a classmate.

Scholastic Honesty

Turning in work that is not your own, or any other form of scholastic dishonesty, will result in a major course penalty, possibly failure of the course. This standard applies to all drafts and assignments, and a report of the incident will be submitted to the Office of the Dean of Students and filed in your permanent UT record. Under certain circumstances, the Dean of Students will initiate proceedings to expel you from the University. So, take care to read and understand the Statement on Scholastic Responsibility, which can be found online at <http://www.utexas.edu/cola/depts/rhetoric/firstyearwriting/plagiarismcollusion.php>. If you have any doubts about your use of sources, ask your instructor for help before handing in the assignment.

Students With Disabilities

Any student with a documented disability who requires academic accommodations should contact Services for Students with Disabilities at 512-471-6259 (voice) or 1-866-329-3986 (video phone) as soon as possible to request an official letter outlining authorized accommodations. More information is available online at <http://www.utexas.edu/diversity/ddce/ssd>.

Email Accounts

Email is an official means of communication at UT-Austin, and your instructor will use this medium to communicate class information. You are therefore required to obtain a UT email account and to check it daily. All students may claim an email address at no cost by going to <http://www.utexas.edu/its/services/email/>.

Questions about these policies should be addressed to:

Department of Rhetoric & Writing
The University of Texas at Austin
Parlin Hall, Room 3
rhetoric@uts.cc.utexas.edu
(512) 471-6109\

Plagiarism & Collusion

Statement on Scholastic Responsibility

The writing you do in the Department of Rhetoric and Writing (DRW) courses must be your own. Passing off the work of others as your own can be either plagiarism or collusion. Both are scholastic offenses that the Department of Rhetoric and Writing will not tolerate. Be certain you understand what these terms mean.

This statement describes the acceptable and unacceptable forms of quoting and paraphrasing information in your written work and defines specific types of academic violations. Please read this statement carefully. Its detailed information can help you understand the need for documentation whenever you incorporate research into your papers. If parts of the statement are unclear, ask your instructor to explain them.

Plagiarism. The General Information Catalog of the University of Texas at Austin defines *plagiarism* as follows: "the appropriation, buying, receiving as a gift, or obtaining by any means another's work and the submission of it as one's own academic work offered for credit."

- You commit plagiarism if you fail to acknowledge the sources of any information in your paper that is not either common knowledge or personal knowledge. Common knowledge includes facts, dates, events, information, and concepts that belong generally to the educated public. Even if you used a reference book to discover the dates of George Washington's presidency, for example, you would not have to acknowledge the source because those dates fall into the range of historical common knowledge. If you borrowed material that interpreted or commented on Washington's presidency, however, you would be expected to cite your source. You can acknowledge a source through in-text citations, attribution lines (for example, "George Will observes in *Men at Work* . . ."), footnotes, or other forms of documentation approved by your instructor.
- You commit plagiarism if you fail to acknowledge direct quotation either by using quotation marks when quoting short passages or indentation when quoting longer passages. Without the quotation marks or indentation, a passage copied directly from a source might be considered plagiarized even if it were followed by an in-text citation or a footnote: the citation or footnote acknowledges that you have a source but it does not indicate that you have borrowed someone else's exact words. If you use the language of a source, word-for-word, you must use quotation marks or block indentation.
- You commit plagiarism if you too closely paraphrase the original words of your source. Some students think that they can avoid a charge of plagiarism by changing a few words in each sentence they copy, or by rearranging the shape of phrases or the order of sentences in a paragraph. This is not true. When you take notes, you must be careful to put ideas in your own words, or to use direct quotation when you are relying on phrases borrowed directly from a source.
- You commit plagiarism if you borrow the ideas, examples, or structure of your source without acknowledging it. You can be guilty of plagiarism if you systematically borrow the ideas and

organization of a source—even if the language of your piece is substantially original. A student who, for example, reports on a major news event by using exactly the same ideas in the same order as they appear in an article in *Time* or *Newsweek* might be accused of plagiarism.

- You commit plagiarism if you take, buy, or receive a paper written by someone else and present it as your own.
- You commit plagiarism if you use one paper for two different courses, or re-use a paper previously submitted for credit, without the prior approval of both instructors.

If you want to use words, ideas, or the structure of a selection such as the passage below from *Harper's*, you may do so correctly in two ways.

Medical costs will bankrupt this country if they continue on their current trajectory. And there are no data to demonstrate that improved management techniques will solve the problem. "Managed care" and "managed competition" might save money in the short run (though the examples of some other managed industries—such as the utilities and airlines do not inspire confidence). But the bulk of the savings achieved by Health Maintenance Organizations has been achieved by cutting back on expensive, unprofitable facilities such as burn centers, neonatal-intensive-care units, emergency rooms, and the like. In other words, HMOs conduct what amounts to a hidden form of health-care rationing—confident that municipal and university hospitals are still around to pick up the slack. (Gaylin 62)

From: Gaylin, Willard M.D. "Faulty Diagnosis: Why Clinton's Health-Care Plan Won't Cure What Ails Us." *Harper's* (Oct. 1993): 57-64.

You may quote from the passage directly, using appropriate citations and quotation marks, or (when the quotation is lengthy) indentation. For example:

Willard Gaylin, a professor of psychiatry at Columbia Medical School, maintains that "medical costs will bankrupt this country if they continue on their current trajectory. And there are no data to demonstrate that improved management techniques will solve the problem" (62).

You may report the information in your own words, acknowledging Gaylin as your source and using an in-text citation to indicate the location of the passage:

Doctor Gaylin, for instance, does not believe that the improved management techniques proposed by the Clinton administration will solve the problem of rising medical costs, because the cost-cutting measures followed by HMOs under the current system will not be feasible when all Americans belong to such health collectives (62).

You may not simply change a few words or phrases and call the material your own, even if you acknowledge a source. The following passage based on Gaylin's original would be considered plagiarism, with or without an in-text citation or footnote:

Medical expenses will ruin America if we stay on our current path. There is no evidence that better management techniques will fix the trouble. "Managed care" may save some money today, but the way things are we will still pay for expensive, unprofitable care tomorrow.

You may not call the work your own if you change the language in the original passage but closely follow its organization, ideas, and examples. Most instructors would consider the following passage too much like Gaylin's original to be considered acceptable as a student's work:

Our country will go broke if it follows on its current path. And there is no information that says we can get out of this mess through better management. HMOs are successful today because they leave the county and teaching hospitals to fund costly, unprofitable specialized care (Gaylin 62).

Collusion. The current General Information Catalog of the University of Texas at Austin defines *collusion* as follows: "the unauthorized collaboration with another person in preparing academic assignments offered for credit or collaboration with another person to commit a violation of any section of the rules on scholastic dishonesty."

- You commit collusion if you allow someone else to write your papers.
- You also commit collusion if you allow someone else to edit your papers. It is scholastically dishonest for students to employ tutors to correct, edit, or modify essays in any substantive way. The same reservations and restrictions apply, within reason, to any outside assistance you may receive from a parent, friend, roommate, or academic tutor. Any changes, deletions, rearrangements, additions, or corrections made in your essays should represent your own work. If you want assistance in a course beyond that which your instructor can offer in class or in office hours, you may use the DRW's Undergraduate Writing Center (UWC) in the FAC or remote locations or the Learning Skills Center (LSC) in Jester A332. Tutors at these facilities are trained to comment on essays and to offer advice without editing or rewriting papers.

PENALTIES: If you have any questions or doubts about the way you are employing sources or getting assistance in writing a given paper, consult your instructor before handing it in. The penalties for plagiarism or collusion can be severe. In all demonstrable cases of either offense, the DRW recommends that its instructors fail the student for the entire course, not just for the paper. However, the penalty in a given case is at the discretion of the individual instructor.

Your instructor must discuss any charge of scholastic dishonesty directly with you and may also refer you to the Chair or Associate Chair of the Department of Rhetoric and Writing. In most instances, a plagiarism or collusion case is resolved either in the meeting between student and instructor, or between instructor, student, and Chair or Associate Chair. If it is not, a student has a right to a hearing before a designated University official and a right to make an appeal to the Office of the Dean of Students.

RHE 309k Syllabus Tuesday-Thursday Schedule

Date	Major Assignment Due Dates
TH 8-28	
T 9-2	
TH 9-4	
T 9-9	
TH 9-11	Research topic proposal due.
T 9-16	Research Summary 1 due
TH 9-18	Research Summary 2 due
T 9-23	
TH 9-25	Interview Prep Packet due
T 9-30	Rhetorical analysis draft due
TH 10-2	Rhetorical analysis due
T 10-7	
TH 10-9	
T 10-14	Rhetorical Analysis revision due
TH 10-16	
T 10-21	Researcher profile draft due
TH 10-23	Researcher profile due
T 10-28	CNN draft due
TH 10-30	CNN article due
T 11-4	
TH 11-6	Science op-ed draft due
T 11-11	Science op-ed due
TH 11-13	
T 11-18	Scientific American Draft due
TH 11-20	Scientific American Article due
T 11-25	
TH 11-27	Thanksgiving day, no class
T 12-2	Final Presentations
TH 12-4	Final Presentations
T 12-12	Revised Portfolio Due