

WRIT 1122: Rhetoric and Writing Futures

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Office Hours:

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Tuesdays 11:30-1:00 and Thursdays by Appt.



QUICK OVERVIEW

We'll be using "the future" to do stuff as producers and consumers of texts in academic and civic life. Specifically, we'll investigate the relationship between writing and "the future" as a cultural construct and rhetorical tool for persuading others (and ourselves) that some particular course of action is the best way to go.

"The future" is an almost shockingly powerful tool that writers and other rhetors use to make all sorts of things happen, and, through their texts, "the future" does a lot of big, gnarly cultural work. Sometimes, it's a terrifying inevitability, and we're at its mercy; sometimes, it's a valuable and finite commodity, and we need to claim it as our own; sometimes, it's a great destiny, as yet unwritten, and we need to figure out how to bring it into being. Our projects will explore these and other rhetorical possibilities, and our day-to-day conversations will range from the rhetoric of artificial intelligence and human connection to the rhetoric of space travel and the last frontier to that of a number of always-impending apocalypses—and the relation between each of these and writing. Plan to (learn to) compose across a range of genres (street-corner tirade, multimedia essay, digital video PSA, etc.) and for a variety of educated audiences (both civic and academic).

Please note: our work together will be of particular use to anyone wanting to use writing and rhetoric to survive the end of days, establish congenial relations with our new robot overlords, and speed/delay the development of a Post-Earth economy and culture. However, though we'll use a bit of goofery and a bit of slightly out-there speculative philosophical discussion to help us experiment and grow, we are about some relatively serious civic business. As engaged and ethical textual citizens, we'll try to learn what we need to in order to deliberately use writing and rhetoric to make an actual impact on our own and others' future(s).

Learning Objectives*

Throughout the course, we'll focus on developing your:

- Rhetorical and Argumentative Literacy

So, in your work, you'll want to try to:

- Demonstrate practical knowledge of the concept "rhetorical situation," through the abilities both to analyze and to write effectively in different kinds of situations.
- Demonstrate proficiency with basic elements of rhetorical analysis (such as logos, ethos, and pathos) in a range of texts, and the application of that facility in your own writing.
- Demonstrate the ability to produce writing that effectively provides evidence and reasoning for assertions, for audiences of educated readers.
- Demonstrate the ability to incorporate and attribute or document source material in rhetorically effective ways.

- Writing Process and Transfer-Abilities

So, in your work, you'll want to try to:

- Demonstrate the ability to use feedback to revise your own writing and the ability to provide useful feedback to others.
- Demonstrate the ability to edit and proofread your writing.
- Demonstrate the ability to successfully transfer writing skills and knowledge between genres.

- Critical Reflection and A Self-Selected Skill/Literacy (Related to Rhetoric/Writing)

So, in your work, you'll want to try to:

- Demonstrate the ability to clearly articulate a rhetorical/writing-related learning goal you intend to achieve in the future and then do so.
- Demonstrate the ability to achieve that learning goal.
- Demonstrate the ability to critically reflect on your learning as a writer and reader.

Course Texts

All course readings will be available digitally via Canvas, hosted by external websites (with urls provided in class or via Canvas), or circulated in class.

* Further details about the WRIT 1122 and WRIT 1133 course sequence can be found at: <http://www.du.edu/writing/firstyear/writ1122.html>

In some instances, you may need to print out & bring hard copies to class or purchase a book or rent a film as part of your work with your reading/discussion group (see below). In most cases, however, you will simply need to have web-based access to digital copies.

Projects and Grading

Your course grade is based on your written projects and your in-class assignments. Please remember that a grade of “C” means your work is satisfactory/average. It is not a negative assessment of your abilities. We’ll use a standard scale:

A	100 - 94	B-	83 - 80	D+	69 - 67
A-	93 - 90	C+	79 - 77	D	66 - 64
B+	89 - 87	C	76 - 74	D-	63 - 60
B	86 - 84	C-	73 - 70	F	59 -

As is the case with most writing-intensives offered at this level, you should plan to put in at least 10-12 hours of outside work (for the most part, reading and writing) per week for this course (that number is based on 2 – 3 hours of work per credit hour, and this course is 4 credit hours). We’ll produce roughly 6000 – 7500 words of revised text for this class. A very brief description of your major projects is below, and I will provide more detail for each assignment as we go.

Here’s the breakdown:

In-Class Experiments and Workshops 15 points Due: During Class

During class each day, we will compose and workshop our writing. Sometimes, this will take the form of a small, individual writing experiment and sometimes it might take the form of a collaborative workshop. Think of these as a very intricate series of brief practice opportunities designed to help you develop transfer-able skills and knowledge to be used in larger projects (because that’s what they are!). We will post something from our work together online each class, which will generally be graded pass/fail according to the following rubric: Pass=Complete, Not Noticeably Riddled with Linguistic/Typographical Errors, Follows the Directions.

Please note: bonus points may be earned for submissions that are also particularly impressive for any of a number of reasons (notable creativity, sophistication of thought, particularly large learning gains demonstrated in a very short time, etc.).

Plan for the Future: A Digital Essay 20 points Due: 1/20/16

Our first major project. You will plan, draft, workshop, and publish a digital essay in which you argue for a particular future for yourself—but here’s the kicker: though the *process* by which you develop that argument should be really useful to *you*, the finished piece itself should be both interesting and persuasive to an educated audience of people who *don’t know you personally*. We will workshop

drafts of this project together in class, and the published version will be assessed using a developed rubric.

Open Choice Revision Project	20 points	Due: 2/10/16
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Our second major project. You will revise one of our small, in-class writing experiments into a much longer, more complex piece for an educated audience. This project will begin with a supporting/development document—a formal proposal—in which you will argue for a particular future version of the piece you intend to revise and lay out a clear argument for a) why that version of the piece should be pursued and b) how best to accomplish that revision. We will workshop drafts of this project together in class, and the published version will be assessed using a developed rubric.

Reading/Discussion Group Blog & PSA	30 points	Due: 2/29/16
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A quarter-long independent reading project. You will, with a small crew of like-minded compadres, develop and maintain a website for an educated audience interested in the general topic of your reading group for the term (Apocalypses, 22nd Century Environment, Post-Human Life, Post-Earth Culture, Other). On this site, you will publish, at minimum, an academic blog (with contributions from each member of the reading group) about what you're reading and a well-informed multimodal public service announcement (PSA), both for an educated audience interested in the same general topic as your group. We will workshop drafts of both the blog entries and the PSA together in class, and we will use a developed rubric to assess your work here.

Critical Reflection & Portfolio	15 points	Due: 3/10/16
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Our final project. You will complete a final revision *either* to one of our major projects *or* one of our smaller, in-class experiments. This piece and no more than two others will serve as your primary evidence for a reflective argument you'll make about the degree to which you've met the learning objectives for the course and about yourself as an engaged and ethical textual citizen, able to use writing and rhetoric to make an actual impact your our own and others' future(s). You will submit a very early draft of this project for review and discussion during our midterm conferences, and the final version will workshopped in class and will be assessed using a developed rubric.

COURSE CALENDAR*

Week 1 (1/4, 1/6)

Course Introduction, Intro to Writing-Rhetoric-Futurity, First Project Overview: "Plan for the Future: A Digital Essay"

Week 2 (1/11, 1/13)

Reading/Discussion Groups and Rhetorical Analysis, Planning for Persuasion and Deliberative Rhetorics, Multimodal Composition

Week 3 (1/18, 1/20)

No Classes on Monday for MLK Day, Portfolio Workshop
Plan for the Future: A Digital Essay Due 1/20/16

Week 4 (1/25, 1/27)

Second Project Overview: "Open Choice Revision Project," Transfer-Ability,
Revision vs. Editing, Originality and Cliché

Week 5 (2/1, 2/3)

Analysis for Argumentative Purposes, Midterm Conferences

Week 6 (2/8, 2/10)

Rhetorics of Change, Portfolio Workshop
Open Choice Revision Project Due 2/10/16

Week 7 (2/15, 2/17)

Third Project Overview: "Public Service Announcement," Civic and Academic
Audiences

Week 8 (2/22, 2/24)

Genre Ecologies and Argumentation, Kairos, Transfer and Multimodal
Composition

Week 9 (2/29, 3/2)

Multimodal Revision and Editing, Academic vs. Civic Purposes, Portfolio
Workshop
PSA Project Due 3/2

Week 10 (3/7, 3/9)

Critical Reflections and Reflective Argumentation/Persuasion, Final Portfolio
Workshop
Critical Reflection and Portfolio Due 3/10

Please note, this schedule is tentative and subject to change. A more detailed list of readings and smaller deadlines for project components will be included in each assignment handout.

COURSE POLICIES*

Attendance and Late Work

Wicked simple: be present for the whole class each time, get caught up quickly if you miss one, and turn everything in on time.

* Further details about University Writing Program course policies may be found at:
<http://www.du.edu/writing/firstyear/policies.html>

1. If you're here for the whole class and actively participating, you're "present"; everything else is "absent." If you're significantly late or leave early, you've missed class (so, absent). Be present! There is no need to contact me if you will miss a class (athletes with official traveling schedules are an exception here) as there is no difference between "excused" or "unexcused" absences. Of course, emergencies of many stripes do happen, and we can address those on a case-by-case basis. Absences will generally have a negative impact on your performance in the class and, in turn, the quality of the class as a whole. So, if you miss 15% (3 class days) or more of the class meetings, I will advise you to drop the class and take it again when you can give it your full attention.
2. Keeping in mind that missed in-class work cannot be made up, life happens. I get it. It's not the end of the world if you miss a class meeting, but being present is a crucial part of any hands-on, active, workshop course.
3. If you *do* miss a class, you should get notes and information about what you missed from a classmate and come to the next class *already caught up and ready to roll*. If you're contacting me after a missed class, please keep the following examples in mind:

YES, DEFINITELY: "Hi, Professor Singer! I just wanted to let you know I'll be popping in during your office hours tomorrow. I missed class today, but I've gotten notes Jack/Jill, and I just have a couple of questions about the second activity."

ABSOLUTELY NOT: "Hi, Professor Singer! What did I miss in class yesterday?"

4. Generally speaking, no late work will be accepted for credit.

Tech

- *Cell Phones*: Cell phones must be turned off and stowed during class.
- *Computers*: Please bring your laptop/tablet to each class session. However, computers will only be used during designated times (primarily for the purposes of in-class writing or exploring an online resource).
- *Storage*: Computers are willful beasts. A crashed computer the night before a big project is due is a huge bummer (and will not get anyone an extension). So, please save often and back up files in progress.
- *Files*: When you submit files in this class, please be sure to *always* submit them to the appropriate location in our Canvas site (never in an email) with a rhetorically appropriate and effective file name (including, at minimum, your last name and some identifying title that tells me what it is).

General Conduct, DU Honor Code & Plagiarism

It is expected that all of us conduct ourselves in a courteous, professional, and adult manner. Because our course regularly involves class discussion and group activities, it is imperative that each student treats his or her classmates and the instructor with respect and dignity. Indeed, all students are expected to abide by the University of Denver Honor Code. Expectations include the application of academic integrity and honesty in your class participation and assignments. The Writing Program follows the Council of Writing Program Administrators policy "[Defining and Avoiding Plagiarism](#)," which states, "In an instructional setting, plagiarism occurs when a writer deliberately uses someone else's language, ideas, or other original (not common-knowledge) material without acknowledging its source." DU's Honor Code also maintains that all members of the University must responsibly use the work of others. Students who have plagiarized a project will receive an F on that project, and the instructor will inform the Director of Writing and the Office of Community and Citizenship Standards, which may take further action. Any documented acts of plagiarism after the first may be subject to more severe actions.

Accommodation

The Writing Program will provide reasonable accommodations to every student who has a disability that has been documented by The [University of Denver Disability Services Program](#) (303-871-2372).

Getting Help

Please come see me during office hours (listed at the top of this syllabus). You're not bothering me—I want to help you! Send me an email, of course—but know that this may not be the best way to get the help you're looking for. In general, you can expect a response from me within 24 hours during the week and 48 hours over the weekend.

Also, go to the University Writing Center. Go early. Go often. The Writing Center supports and promotes effective student writing across the University of Denver campus. In a non-evaluative collaborative setting, one-on-one consultants help DU students with all kinds of writing projects: class assignments, personal writing, professional writing, and multimedia projects at any stage of the writing process. For contact information and further detail, please visit: <http://www.du.edu/writing/writingcenter/index.html>.