

# Writing 150: Writing and Rhetoric

Winter 2012 - Section 079 - MWF 2:00 - 2:50 - 123 HRCB

## Instructor Information

---

Christopher Husberg

Email: [husberg.byu@gmail.com](mailto:husberg.byu@gmail.com)

Office: 3004 JKB

Office hours: M/W 11:30 AM - 1:00 PM, or by appointment

Box: University Writing Office, 4110 JFSB, weekdays 8-5

### **Welcome...**

... to Writing 150. This class, as you may intuit, is about writing, which means you will do lots and lots of it. Don't expect otherwise, and don't think you can get away without doing it. My job is to help you become better at it. You will also read voraciously, spend time in the library, and review each others' work, all with the intent to enhance your writing. This section will focus heavily on using **blogs** to enhance literacy.

Writing, and rhetoric, are everywhere. I'm here to help you realize that, and to help you realize how you can use these skills to your advantage, whether you're writing an opinion editorial, a research paper, a letter to a local politician, a presentation, a memorandum to a supervisor, or an angsty teenage vampire romance novel.

Words are meant to be used to our advantage. Hopefully, this course will help you understand how.

## Texts, Supplies, and Helpful Resources

---

### **Required Texts**

*Writing Matters (Special BYU Edition)*, by Rebecca Moore Howard (WM)

*Writing and Rhetoric*, by Brett McNelly and Brian Jackson (WR)

*Supplemental Guide to Writing and Rhetoric*, by Brett McNelly and Brian Jackson (SG)

### **Helpful Resources**

Writing Center: 4026 JKB; [english.byu.edu/writingcenter](http://english.byu.edu/writingcenter)

Library Instruction: <http://net.lib.byu.edu/instruction>

## Course Objectives

---

Writing 150 is designed to introduce students to college-level writing, reading, and research with an emphasis on argumentation and rhetorical analysis. Writing 150 pays particular attention to the ways arguments work within discourse communities. Individual sections are structured around a focused topic area (e.g., globalization, mass media, religion in America, and the environment) and require extensive writing, reading, and research in the topic area.

Our topic area for this section is **Blogging**.

By taking WRTG 150, you will learn to

1. Use rhetoric in ethical ways, characterized by a sense of rigor, goodwill, and cooperation.
2. Recognize and assess your own and other's rhetorical situations.
3. Use rhetoric to compose arguments in a variety of genres for specific audiences and purposes.
4. Critically read texts. This includes
  - analyzing how a text functions in a specific situation, community, or public;
  - analyzing the nuances of language (diction, figures of speech, tone, etc.);
  - identifying and evaluating the elements of an argument--claims, reasons, assumptions, and ethical, emotional, and logical appeals.
5. Use a flexible and effective writing process, including prewriting, drafting, revising, and editing.
6. Write coherent and unified texts (effective introductions, clear thesis, supporting details, transitions, and strong conclusions).
7. Use style, grammar, punctuation, spelling, mechanics, genre conventions, and document design correctly and effectively.
8. Navigate the library to locate primary and secondary sources, evaluate the appropriateness and credibility of those sources, and effectively incorporate and accurately document outside sources in written arguments.

**A note from me:** First and foremost, I'm here to help you. My objective is to guide you towards becoming a critical thinker, an analytic reader, and an efficient and persuasive writer. I believe that as you develop these skills, they will help you not only throughout your college career, but throughout the rest of your life as well. Also, each class period will be largely discussion-based. I think that everyone brings something different to the table and has a perspective that deserves to be heard. We are all students, and we can all be teachers as well. I expect full participation from every class member in order to best facilitate the learning process and look forward to working with and learning from all of you.

## **Course Requirements**

---

### **Major Assignments (700 points)**

Opinion Editorial  
 Rhetorical Analysis  
 Issues Paper  
 Multimodal Argument

These assignments will reflect your writing improvement through multiple drafts, conferencing with me, and peer review. We will meet one-on-one for each paper and discuss your progress. The drafts and revisions of each paper will be submitted to me electronically via email, while the final product will be published as a post on your blog.

### **Blog Assignments (100 points)**

Throughout the semester we will utilize blogs (from Google's Blogger site) to encourage and assist in our writing, discussion, and research. See the Blog Task Sheet for more information.

### **Final Exam (50 points)**

The final exam is scheduled by the university for **THURSDAY 17 April 2011 from 3:00 - 6:00 PM in the Harold R. Clark building (HRCB) room 123**. In keeping with strictly enforced university policy, **absolutely no early or late exams will be given** and you will **fail the course** if you miss the final. Tell you parents who are going to buy your flight home, your boyfriend who is going to propose, your older sister who is driving you, and whoever else needs to know in order to make this date work. Its your only shot. Seriously.

### **Punctuation Exercises (50 points)**

You will be given five punctuation exercises to complete throughout the semester. Each one is worth 10 points.

### **Participation (50 points)**

50 points of your final grade will come from homework, reading assignments, in-class writings, quizzes, and in-class participation. Please note: I will occasionally (or often--who knows!) give **pop quizzes and/or rush writes which cannot be made up if you are absent or tardy.**

### **Library Tour, Tests, and Research Sessions (45 points)**

You are required to take a tour of the library, do an online tutorial, and take assessments on the information you learned as part of this course. These resources can be obtained in the LRC on the 4th floor of the library and on Blackboard. In addition, for two class periods this semester we will meet in the library. Since the library will become one of your most valuable resources throughout your college career, these sessions are NOT optional. These library sessions will be conducted by a member of the library staff who will present you with a few simple tutorials on how to utilize the library as a resource for your studies. For additional information, see the page printed at the end of the syllabus.

### **Teacher Evaluation (5 points)**

I appreciate and look closely at my student evaluations. Students who complete the evaluation at the end of the semester will receive 5 points.

### **Extra Credit**

There may be a few extra credit opportunities as the semester goes on--I will let you know--but don't count on them. You are required to take your first assignment (Opinion Editorial) to the Writing Center. However, I will give you an extra 10 points (each) if you take your Rhetorical Analysis and your Issues Paper in as well. But remember, **the best "extra" credit** can be found through the art of revision. Students who put in the time to rewrite their papers ALWAYS score higher than those who choose not to do so.

## **Grades**

---

### **Grading Breakdown**

|                        |            |
|------------------------|------------|
| Opinion Editorial      | 100 points |
| Rhetorical Analysis    | 200 points |
| Issues Paper           | 300 points |
| Multimodal Argument    | 100 points |
| Blog                   | 100 points |
| Final Exam             | 50 points  |
| Participation/Homework | 50 points  |
| Grammar/Punctuation    | 50 points  |
| Library Tests          | 45 points  |
| Teacher Evaluation     | 5 points   |

### **Grading Scale**

| Points   | Grade | Points  | Grade | Points  | Grade | Points  | Grade |
|----------|-------|---------|-------|---------|-------|---------|-------|
| 1000-940 | A     | 869-830 | B     | 769-730 | C     | 669-630 | D     |

|         |    |         |    |         |    |           |    |
|---------|----|---------|----|---------|----|-----------|----|
| 939-900 | A- | 829-800 | B- | 729-700 | C- | 629-600   | D- |
| 899-870 | B+ | 799-770 | C+ | 699-670 | D+ | Below 600 | E  |

## Course Policies

---

### Attendance

According to department policy, students are permitted to miss three (that's 3) classes, no questions asked. Each additional absence *will* result in a one-third reduction of their final grade (A- to B+, C to C-, etc.). If a student misses more than a third of any class period, they will be considered absent for that day--if you are more than twenty minutes late, or leave more than twenty minutes early, or if you (somehow, miraculously) miss the middle twenty minutes of class, don't expect to receive credit for that day.

Excused absences for student athletes and students participating in other student groups authorized by the university **count toward the permitted number of absences**. However, these students are not penalized for additional excused absences as long as they show me signed proof of their participation in said events from their team/group **before they occur**. This signed proof should be given to me no later than **next Thursday (8 September)**.

Moral of the story: don't miss class. This is a discussion-based class, and your input is wanted and valued (and, in many cases, required). I certainly won't beg any of you to be here, but if you do miss then you and the class will miss out on your input and comments. Also, don't be late--it is disruptive and negatively affects the class experience for everyone. You are all adults, supposedly, so I'm going to treat you that way, and I expect you to come to class on time. But if it becomes a problem, I do reserve the right to lower the grades of those people who are consistently tardy.

### Late Assignments

The major assignments should **not** be turned in late. If you are leaving town, plan to give me your paper early. If you have an emergency, please talk to me. We can find a solution if you come to me *before an assignment is due*. Of course, you are always free to choose. If a late paper is your choice, it will cost me extra time and will therefore cost you 15% off your grade per day. That's **per day**--NOT per class day. A paper is considered late after class has started--11:00 AM. Minor assignments will **never** be accepted late.

### Failure Policy

You are *required*, by department policy, to complete each of the four major paper assignments (Opinion Editorial, Rhetorical Analysis, Issues Paper, and Multimodal Argument) and the final. **If you fail to do so, you will fail the class**. If you do nothing else, get those four major paper assignments done. If you have trouble keeping up, talk to me *before* it becomes unmanageable.

### Required Format

All papers submitted for this course must be typed with 1-inch margins (this means you may have to change the margins in Word's default page setup) in a serif (Google it) 12-point font, double spaced. They must adhere to current MLA (Modern Language Association) style guidelines where specified. Please do not attempt to alter assignment length by changing fonts, margins, etc.--I will notice. All final drafts of papers **MUST** be stapled (with the rubric and cover sheet paper-clipped to the project). (Incidentally, the only assignment you will turn in using this format will likely be the Issues Paper, as the rest of your assignments will be published as blog posts.)

## **Disruption Policy**

This is a class on crafting arguments, and we are going to want to talk to each other in class. We will be learning from each other, discussing ideas, debating, agreeing, and disagreeing. Because of this, certain disruptions are not tolerated: iPods, cell phones (especially text messaging), sleeping, and inappropriate/unrelated comments. General rudeness, apathy, or arrogance toward your classmates is bad news for you and will show on your overall grade. Don't do it.

We will be using various forms of technology throughout our class. Laptops, iPads, and similar devices are allowed **only if you are using them to take notes or otherwise participate in class**. If I catch you doing something unrelated to class on your device (email, Facebook, g-chat, Starcraft II or any kind of computer game), you will be counted absent and I reserve the right to ask you to leave the class.

## **Preventing Sexual Harassment**

Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972 prohibits sex discrimination against any participant in an educational program or activity that receives federal funds. The act is intended to eliminate sex discrimination in education. Title IX covers discrimination in programs, admissions, activities, and student-to-student sexual harassment. BYU's policy against sexual harassment extends not only to employees of the university but to students as well. If you encounter unlawful sexual harassment or gender based discrimination, please talk to your professor; contact the Equal Employment Office at 378-5895 or 367-5689 (24 hours); or contact the Honor Code Office at 378-2847.

## **Students With Disabilities**

Brigham Young University is committed to providing a working and learning atmosphere that reasonable accommodates qualified persons with disabilities. If you have any disability which may impair your ability to complete this course successfully, please contact the Services for Students with Disabilities Office (378-2767). Reasonable academic accommodations are reviewed for all students who have qualified documented disabilities. Services are coordinated with the student and instructor by the SSD Office. If you need assistance or if you feel you have been unlawfully discriminated against on the basis of disability, you may seek resolution through established grievance policy and procedures. You should contact the Equal Employment Office at 378-5895, D-282 ASB.

## **Plagiarism**

In keeping with the principles of the BYU Honor Code, students are expected to be honest in all of their academic work. Academic honesty means, most fundamentally, that any work you present as your own must in fact be your own work and not that of another. All thoughts and language that are not your own must be appropriately cited. Violations of this principle may result in a failing grade in the course and additional disciplinary action by the university.

**Plagiarism is stupid, it's theft, and it insults me. It disposes me against you for the rest of forever. Don't do it.**

## **Students with Stress, Depression, and/or Panic**

The University offers numerous **free** opportunities for counseling. If you feel like you're falling apart, there's a lot of help to be had on campus. Let me know if you think you may need some of that help, and I'll get you in contact with the right people.

## **Above All**

Talk with me! Seek me out! I am available at every step of the writing process. As you read, think, research, formulate your views, and polish your drafts, I want to hear from you. If you have trouble keeping up with our schedule, if you do not understand some of the material, or if you feel overwhelmed in any way, please email me, call me, talk to me in class, or visit my office. I will always be much more

lenient if an issue is brought to my attention *before* class is missed or an assignment is turned in late.  
Other than that, good luck!

## Blog Task Sheet

### Requirements:

This is, above all, an academic blog: posts and responses must conform to the standards of written, academic English. While the writing doesn't have to be polished to perfection, complete sentences are necessary, and errors in basic capitalization and grammar are unacceptable.

*You will be required to post, on average, twice a week.* Generally, blog assignments will be due Monday and Wednesday at **midnight**. Some posts will be "free posts," in which you can write about whatever strikes your fancy; others will be more structured, dictated by prompts posted on the class blog (URL below). All posts should be about 1-2 paragraphs long (unless otherwise specified). You will also be required to post *at least five comments per week*. These comments should be at least 1-2 sentences long. If someone comments on your post, it is recommended that you respond to their comment--this helps create dialog, and is common blogging etiquette. Posts and comments should not repeat what other class members have said; new insights should be given. The goal is to expand our classroom community into the blogosphere; if you put some effort into this project, it can work very well and yield interesting--and beneficial--results.

This should not be time-intensive--your two main posts per week should take you about 15-20 minutes each, and will often supplement work or reading that you are already doing for the class.

### Blog Specifications:

The class blog page is <http://husbergw150.blogspot.com/>. Blog prompts, announcements, and other assignments will be posted there. You are to create a Blogger profile (which means creating a gmail account if you don't already have one), start your own blog, add the class blog page and, eventually, each of your classmates' blogs to your blogroll. You may optionally use Google Reader to keep track of your classmates' posts.

*Your posts must be published before midnight on the day they are due.* All of your comments for the current post must be made before the next post is due. However, you will receive more points if you post your comments throughout the week instead of all at once (which means attempting to keep tabs on the conversations in which you participate). Also, you must comment on *different people's blogs each week*, cycling through everyone in the class. Of course, there is nothing wrong with posting *more* than five comments in a week, and if you find a classmate or two whose thoughts you find particularly interesting or thought-provoking (or disagreeable, even), by all means continue the conversation with those students as well.

### Creation:

While I don't necessarily expect you all to be blogging wizards by the end of the class (let alone at the beginning), I do encourage you to learn as much as you can about this genre of writing. I also encourage you to take control and start learning things on your own, familiarizing yourself with the internet and its tools and so forth. Thus, I won't be offering much formal instruction on how to *create* a blog. Now before you get your gym shorts in a twist about how I'm abandoning you, listen to this: Youtube isn't just for funny videos about cats or *Star Wars* or bedroom

intruders. There's some good instructional stuff on there, too, including some good videos on how to create a blog. Here's something to start you out if you're feeling lost: [http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BnploFsS\\_tY](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BnploFsS_tY). There are also websites, blogs, tutorials on Blogger, and much more. The world of the internet is at your disposal--use it.

Also: you are *required* to create a blog using Blogger. While there are many other great ways to make blogs out there (some of them admittedly better than Blogger), this is the easiest way to keep them synced and synthesized for this class. If you already have an active blog, that is great, and if you want you can use that for your class blog as well (as long as it is created through Blogger).

### **Grading:**

The blogging assignment is worth 100 points total (for the whole semester). However, because I don't know *exactly* how many blog posts I'll assign, I can't tell you *exactly* how many points are allocated to each portion of the assignment. But to calm your tempestuous souls, what follows is a preliminary breakdown.

Your actual blog posts themselves are worth three (that's 3) points each. This may not seem like a lot (it really isn't), but it adds up (it really does). That said, I will allow you to skip ONE required blog post gratis--I won't count it against you. However, every consequent post missed after the first one will count against you, and those numbers do start to add up.

I keep track of your comments on your classmates' blogs on a spreadsheet. When I know how many blogposts I'll assign, I'll tally up those points and then apply how full your "comment spreadsheet" is to the remainder. E.g. if we end up having 17 total blog posts (or 18, assuming you didn't complete your gratis post), I would multiply 17 times 3 (=51) and then divide your comments into the remainder of the 100 points (49); if you commented 50% of the time (5 comments per blog post =  $5 \times 17 = 85$ ,  $85/2 = 42.5$  which we'll round to 43 to make it nice and even, thus  $43/85$ ) I would apply that to the remainder of your points making your final score out of 100 a 75. Ack. That is way too much math for a writing class, so I'll stop there (and, really, should have stopped a long time ago). But believe me, it's a fairly precise process. And I do pay attention to content and length and so forth, so don't just vomit something terrible into cyberspace for the world to see. Strive for intelligence; I know you all have it!

That's the long and the short of it. Good luck, and I'm looking forward to blogging with all of you!