

RHE 315 Introduction to Visual Rhetoric (44070) Fall 2010 • Ruskiewicz

Unique Number: 44070
Prerequisite: RHE 306
Course Website: Blackboard
Place and Time: Monday & Wednesday, 2–3:30; PAR 6
Instructor: John Ruskiewicz
Office: Calhoun 202
Telephone: 471–8764 (personal line); 471–6109 (DRC Office)
E-mail: ruskiewicz@mail.utexas.edu
Office Hours: MW 3:30–5 and by appointment

Goals: Rhetoric 315 is a course designed to teach you to analyze and explore visual and non-verbal forms of rhetoric. It remains, first and foremost, a writing class, but one immersed in daily issues of culture, design, and visual literacy. You will be assessed primarily on the quality of your writing in a variety of assignments; you will receive specific criteria for an oral report you will present to the class; you will be expected to peer-edit and respond to your colleague's work throughout the semester. See the syllabus for the subject matter of individual lectures and discussions throughout the semester.

Coursework: You will compose three minor papers for class, develop three major projects, and present one visual text as an oral report. We'll spend considerable time in class developing and writing papers. You'll turn in a draft for each major paper/project, and several of you will have the opportunity to have a project showcased in class—that is, edited by the entire group.

You will also get feedback from me on two of your major projects: I will edit these materials with you, one-on-one, in my office.

Grades: To pass the course, you must turn in **on time** proposals and first drafts for each of the three major papers. Submission of these materials is a course requirement. Drafts will not be letter graded. If you do not turn in a draft of an essay, you will not receive a grade higher than "C" on the final version.

Your final grade will be calculated according to the average of the major projects with the following values:

Project 1 / 25%
Project 2 / 25%
Project 3 / 25%
Minor writing assignments / 10%
Oral Presentation / 10%
Participation / 5%

For more details, check the grading grid on Blackboard. Class participation will be based on the editing you do of colleague's drafts (3 pts), on in class participation (1 pt), and on perfect attendance (1 pt). Note that this grading formula assumes satisfactory attendance and the completion of all assignments (including reading and editing work) on time.

Final versions of papers will receive a letter grade assigned the following values:

A / 100-94
A- / 93-90
B+ / 89-87
B / 86-84
B- / 83-80
C+ / 79-77
C / 76-74
C- / 73-70
D+ / 69-67
D / 66-64
D- / 63-60
F / 59-0

The same values will apply to the final course grade.

Do not discard any drafts, notes, papers or research materials you produce during the course until after you have received a final grade. You may want to keep course materials in a folder or on Webspaces.

You will need to know how to load files to Discussion Boards on the RHE 315 Blackboard site. The process is as simple as attaching a document to email.

Materials and Textbooks: For this class, you will need to purchase:

- John Ruskiewicz, et al., Beyond Words. 2nd edition. New York: Longman, 2009.
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I will also refer to material in the following handbook, but any equivalent book should serve:

- John Ruskiewicz, et al., Scott, Foresman Writer. 5th edition. New York: Longman, 2011.

Attendance/Late Assignments: You are expected to attend class regularly and to participate in in-class editing, revising, and discussion. **If you miss six classes or more, you will fail automatically.** As part of the class participation grade, I award one point to anyone with perfect attendance. Please note that the attendance column on the "Grade Center" records the total number of classes you have missed during the term. Do not add the number in this column to your point total for the course. You don't get extra points for missing class!

Papers, drafts, and other out-of-class assignments are due at the beginning of the class period for which they are assigned. Late drafts will result in the reduction of one point per day from your course total up to a maximum of three points per paper. Late final papers will result in a reduction of one letter grade for each class day they are late. Short out-of-class assignments or Web forum postings are not accepted late. There is no makeup of in-class work and no extra credit.

Scholastic Responsibility/Complaints: Turning in work that is not your own or any other form of scholastic dishonesty will result in a major course penalty (including possible failure in the course). A report of the incident will also be made to the Office of the Dean of Students. For more information about Scholastic Dishonesty, see http://deanofstudents.utexas.edu/sjs/scholdis_whatis.php or search "Scholastic

Dishonesty” on the University of Texas at Austin Website.

Bring any questions you have about grades or policies to me first. Complaints we cannot resolve can be taken to the Associate Director of the Department of Rhetoric and Writing (Parlin 3).

Accommodation for Students with Disabilities : The University of Texas at Austin provides upon request appropriate academic adjustments for qualified students with disabilities. For more information, contact the Division of Diversity and Community Engagement, Services for Students with Disabilities, 471-6259 at <http://www.utexas.edu/diversity/ddce/ssd/>.

Accommodations for Religious Holidays: By UT–Austin policy, you must notify me of your pending absence at least fourteen days prior to the date of a religious holy day. If you must miss a class, an examination, a work assignment, or a project in order to observe a religious holy day, you will be given an opportunity to complete the missed work within a reasonable time after the absence.

Cell Phones: Turn off your cell phone before class begins. I don't permit students to take calls during class and I don't want phones interrupting our work or discussions. If you can't bear to be without a phone for our class period, sign up for a different section.

Course Overview: The day-by-day schedule following indicates the dates of lectures, oral reports, papers, and assignments.

August

August 25 Course introduction/policies

Reading Assignment: *Beyond Words*, Introduction and Chapter 1, "Reading Texts", especially essays at the end of the chapter by Thomas Washington, Manohla Dargis, and Steven Johnson

August 30 Introduction to Rhetoric Discussion of Thomas Washington, "A Librarian's Lament" and Manohla Dargis, "Defending Goliath: Hollywood and the Art of the Blockbuster."

Assignment: Browse *Scott, Foresman Writer 5*, Part 7 Grammar and Part 8 Punctuation and Mechanics, pp. 379–519.

Writing Assignment: Response to Handbook Reading: Three Rules I Never Knew, due September 1 (See Discussion Board for the details.)

September

September 1

Introduction to Rhetoric (cont.)

Discussion of Steven Johnson, "Watching TV Makes You Smarter." Review of Grammar and Mechanics

September 8

Visual Text: *Triumph of the Will* (selected scenes) Discussion

Reading Assignment: *Beyond Words*, Chapter 2 "Composing Texts"

Writing Assignment: Response to *Triumph of the Will*, due September 13 (See Discussion Board for the details.)

September 13

Discussion of responses to *Triumph of the Will* Visual Text: Charlie Chaplin's *The Great Dictator* (selected scenes)

Writing Assignment: Reflection on both *Triumph of the Will* and *The Great Dictator*, due September 15 (See Discussion Board for the details.)

September 15

Discussion of *Triumph of the Will* and *Great Dictator* response assignment.

Visual Text: Prada Marfa

Oral Report/Visual Text Assignment explained (see "Assignments" on Black Board for the complete assignment). First three reports on September 29

Reading Assignment: *Beyond Words*, Chapter 4, Places and Environments, Introduction and Gallery.

September 20 Discuss Chapter 4 Introduction and Gallery

Writing Assignment: Responding to the Blanton, due September 27 (See Discussion Board for the details.)

Reading Assignment: *Beyond Words*, Chapter 4, "Places and Environments," Casebook 4.1, Places We Inhabit: look at the images and browse the first two essays. Then read "The Comfy Chair Revolution."

September 22

Project #1 Places and Environments assigned; first draft due October 11

Reading Assignment: *Beyond Words*, Chapter 4, Casebook 4.3 On the Road

Writing Assignment: Topic Proposal for Project #1, due October 4

September 27

Review of Discussion Board essays on the Blanton Museum

Discussion of Casebook 4.3 On the Road

September 29

First three Visual Texts of the Day: Speakers to be assigned

October

October 4

Topic proposals for Project #1 due.

Discussion of topic proposals for Project #1

October 6

Visual Text of the Day: Speaker to be assigned

Discussion of topic proposals for Project #1 continues.

October 11

Paper #1 Editing Workshop

First draft of Project #1 due

Reading Assignment: *Beyond Words*, Ch. 6, Technology and Science, Introduction and Gallery

October 13

Discussion of Ch. 5 Introduction and Gallery

Project #1 Showcase

Reading Assignment: *Beyond Words*, Cluster 6.1 "Mapping Knowledge" and Cluster 6.3 "Living in Virtual Worlds"

Project #2 Technology and Science assigned, first draft due October 27

Writing Assignment: Topic Proposal for Project #2, due October 20

October 10

Visual Text of the Day: Speaker to be assigned
Discussion of "Technology and Science" assignment

October 20

Visual Text of the Day: Speaker to be assigned
Topic Proposal for Project #2 due Review of topic proposals

October 25

Review of topic proposals for Project #2 (cont.)
Final version of Project #1 due

October 27

Visual Text of the Day: Speaker to be assigned
First draft of Project #2 due
Project #2 Editing Workshop
Reading Assignment: Beyond Words Ch, 7 "Style, Design, and Culture," Introduction and Gallery

November

November 1

Visual Text of the Day: Speaker to be assigned
Project #3: "Style, Design, and Culture" assigned, first draft due November 15
Reading Assignment: Beyond Words, Cluster 7.1 "The Design of Everyday Things"
Writing Assignment: Project #3 topic proposal, due November 8

November 3

Visual Text of the Day: Speakers to be assigned Project #2 Showcases
Reading Assignment: Beyond Words, Clusters 7.2 and 7.3 "The Eyes of the Beholder" and "The Culture and Politics of Design"

November 8

Visual Text of the Day: Speakers to be assigned
Topic proposals for Project #3 due

November 10

Visual Text of the Day: Speakers to be assigned Review of topic proposals (cont.)
Final version of Project #2 due

November 15

Visual Text of the Day: Speakers to be assigned Project #3 Editing Workshop and Showcases
First draft of Project #3 due

November 17

Visual Text of the Day: Speakers to be assigned
Project #3 Showcases

November 22

Visual Text of the Day: Speakers to be assigned
Project #3 Showcases

November 29

Visual Text of the Day: Speaker to be assigned
Project #3 Showcases continue

December

December 1

Visual Text of the Day: Speaker to be assigned
Final version of Project #3 due
Course evaluation

Specific Course Assignments: Following are the three major course assignments as they appear on the RHE 315 Website:

Major Project #1: Places and Environments

Length: 4–5 double-spaced pages (or the visual equivalent)

Purpose: An exercise in describing or analyzing the rhetoric of a place

Topic Proposal due: October 4. Submit the proposal to the appropriate discussion forum.

First draft due: October 11

Final version due: October 25

You have lots of leeway with this first assignment—depending on your interests and inclinations. Begin by reviewing "Writing About Places and Environments" in Chapter 4 of *Beyond Words* (pp. 248–49). This material walks you through the basics of a successful project, from finding a topic to editing it. You will also find useful advice about writing in Chapter 2 of *Beyond Words*.

Then examine Projects 4.1 and 4.2 and especially their corresponding student models—both of them written by former RHE 315 students. You can do either of these assignments, modeling your project on the student samples. Or take a look at Projects 4.3, 4.4, or 4.5: these are options for you as well.

Finally, you may model a project on any one of the professional readings in Chapter 4, even those we haven't discussed in class. For instance, Charles Bowden's "Our Wall" or Holland Carter's "On My Road" might inspire you to write a personal essay of your own about an important region or a road trip you have taken that opened your eyes.

If you do decide to model your project on a particular text or reading in Chapter 4, be sure to mention that intention in your topic proposal. Explain what about the particular reading inspires you to try to write something similar.

Please note the dates above for the topic proposal, first draft, and final version. We'll examine several drafts in class, and I will schedule individual conferences to go over your draft in my office (Calhoun 202).

You will need to submit electronic and paper versions of the first draft and final text of your paper. If you write a traditional paper, it **MUST** follow **proper MLA format** for margins, spacing, headings and title, documentation, etc. Those details are spelled out on pp. 302–16 of *Scott, Foresman Writer* or in any college-level handbook of writing. Check these pages before turning in your **draft**. Don't wait until the final version to get these matters right because I can help you with format problems in the conference we

will schedule. The handbook also explains how to document many types of sources, how to label table, charts, and photographs, and so on.

I am tough on details: don't expect an "A" on any paper that isn't properly formatted or, for example, comes without page numbers.

Major Project #2: Technology and Science

Length: 3–5 double–spaced pages (or the visual equivalent)

Purpose: An exercise in analyzing the rhetoric of technology and science

Topic Proposal due: October 20. Submit the proposal to the appropriate discussion forum.

First draft due: October 27

Final version due: November 10

Just as with the first project, you can tailor this project to your interests and skills. Begin by reading “Writing About Technology and Science” on pp. 386–87 of *Beyond Words*. This brief section offers steps for preparing a successful project, from finding a topic to editing it. You’ll also find advice about writing arguments in Chapter 2 of *Beyond Words* and in Chapters 17–19 of *Scott, Foresman Writer*.

Then examine Projects 6.1 and 6.2 and their corresponding student models—again, one of them was written by a former RHE 315 student. You can select either of these assignments and model your project on the student papers you’ll find there. But before you make a decision, please read these assignments closely and study the examples. As another option, you may model your project on any one of the professional readings in Chapter 6, even one we haven’t discussed in class. If you choose this option, use your topic proposal to identify the text you intend to imitate and then describe what your paper will do differently. Explain, too, what about the particular reading or image inspired you to try to compose something like it.

Note the dates above for the topic proposal, first draft, and final version. We'll examine several drafts in class, and I will schedule individual conferences to go over your draft in my office (Calhoun 202).

You will need to submit both electronic and paper versions of the first draft and final text of your paper. You will need to submit electronic and paper versions of the first draft and final text of your paper. Your paper **MUST** follow **proper MLA format** for margins, spacing, headings and title, documentation, etc. Those details are spelled out on pp. 302–16 of *Scott, Foresman Writer*. Check these pages before turning in your **draft**. Don't wait until the final version to get these matters right. The handbook also explains how to document many types of sources, how to label table, charts and photographs, and so on.

Finally, let me remind you again that I am tough on details: don't expect an "A" on any paper that doesn't have an appropriate opening page or, for example, comes without page numbers.

Major Project #3: Style, Design, and Culture

Length: 4–5 double–spaced pages (or the visual equivalent)

Purpose: An exercise in analyzing the rhetoric of a design

Topic Proposal due: November 8. Submit the proposal to the appropriate discussion forum.

First draft due: November 15

Final version due: December 1

Begin by reading “Writing About Style, Design, and Culture” on pp. 456–57 of Chapter 7 of *Beyond Words* (second edition). This introductory material walks you through the basics of writing a successful project, from finding a topic to editing it. You will also find useful general advice about writing in Chapter 2 of *Beyond Words* and throughout *Scott, Foresman Writer*.

Then examine Projects 7.1 and 7.2 and especially their corresponding student models, one looking at the original *Batman* movie poster and a second analyzing American architecture. (The first paper was written by a former RHE 315 student.) You can do either of these assignments and model your project on these fine student samples.

Or take a look at Projects 7.3, 7.4, or 7.5: these are options for you as well. (Many students enjoy doing the ad analysis described in 7.3.)

Finally, you may model a project on any one of the professional readings in Chapter 7, even one we haven’t discussed in class. If you select this option, be sure to describe the project fully in your topic proposal.

Note the dates above for the topic proposal, first draft, and final version. We’ll examine several drafts in class, but **this time, conferences on the paper will be optional**. Email me if you wish to schedule an appointment to discuss the draft.

You will need to submit electronic and paper versions of the first draft. For the final version, you need to submit an electronic version only—unless you want comments on the paper and expect to pick it up in the spring term. If you write a traditional paper, it **MUST** follow **proper MLA format** for margins, spacing, headings and title, documentation, etc.