

# Rhetoric and Writing Studies

In the College of Arts and Letters

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## Faculty

Emeritus: Bryson, Chase, Hindman, Johns, Miller, Morgan, Poole,

Quandahl, Robinett, Sweedler-Brown

Chair: Bordelon

Professors: Bordelon, McClish, Ornatowski

Associate Professors: Bekins, Boyd, Minifee, Valentine, Werry

Lecturers: Boeck, Borgen, Brown, Brush, Cavender, Cissel,

Copeland, Costello, Goodman, Groza, Hoffman, Holslin, Hughes,

Kelley, Kinkade, Kline, Linfor, Madden, Manley, Merriam, Nerhan,

Owens, Parker, Renner, Sager, Sheppard, Sherman, Sigmon,

Slater, Tempelton, Tomlin, Towner, Underwood, Vanderpot,

Whitworth, Williams, J., Williams, M.

## Offered by the Department

Master of Arts degree in rhetoric and writing studies.

Major in rhetoric and writing studies with the B.A. degree in liberal arts and sciences.

Minor in rhetoric and writing studies.

Certificate in professional writing.

Certificate in advanced teaching of writing

(refer to the *Graduate Bulletin*).

## General Information

The Department of Rhetoric and Writing Studies offers writing programs at all levels for university students. The department works cooperatively with other academic departments and campus groups to plan and develop a comprehensive writing program integrating writing and reading with critical thinking throughout the curriculum.

**Developmental Writing Program:** Developmental writing courses in this program prepare students to satisfy SDSU's competency requirements in written English. For more information, refer to "Writing Requirements" in the "Graduation Requirements" section of this catalog.

**General Education Program:** Completion of courses in this program fulfills the "Written Communication" requirements for the Communication and Critical Thinking portion of the SDSU General Education program.

**Upper Division Courses:** The department offers expository writing ("W") courses which satisfy the university's Graduation Writing Assessment Requirement. The department also offers a required course in the teaching of composition for students in the Single Subject Teaching Credential in English degree program.

## The Major

Rhetoric refers to the study and uses of written, spoken, and visual language. From antiquity to the present, rhetoric has included both theory and practice, looking to produce and understand persuasion in social, political, and institutional settings. Rhetoric reflects on the nature and function of discourse in action, investigates literacy and literacy instruction, and offers frameworks for understanding technical and scientific writing as artifacts of communal practice. The primary areas of study for the major are rhetorical theory, literacy and the teaching of writing, and professional (primarily technical and scientific) writing and public discourse.

The purpose of rhetorical education extends beyond understanding literacy as basic skills. The major teaches literacy as an array of advanced language and critical thinking abilities that enhance a person's participation in professional, civic, and personal life. It offers sustained inquiry into the nature of writing and its relationship to knowledge, culture, and professional practice. It involves students

in composing a variety of texts for multiple audiences and contexts. It provides a specifically rhetorical framework for analyzing and producing texts that circulate across disciplines and writing cultures.

International and native students who want to develop their analytical reading and writing abilities, and those interested in pursuing graduate work or entering more writing-intensive careers will benefit from the major. While virtually all professions are enhanced by skills in writing, critical reading, and analytical thinking, the major may be particularly beneficial to students seeking careers in law, business, science, engineering, non-profits, and technical and scientific writing. Teaching at the primary to university levels also offers opportunities for rhetoric majors who continue their education at the graduate level.

The major includes five core courses intended to introduce students to the study of rhetoric, which incorporates a broad range of topics, including rhetorical theory, cultural rhetoric, and digital rhetorics. The field of rhetoric is interdisciplinary in nature and includes coursework in rhetorical history, gender and rhetoric issues, technical and scientific writing, political rhetoric, and culture. Students select the courses that best suit their future career and educational goals.

## Advising

All College of Arts and Letters majors are urged to consult with their department adviser as soon as possible; they are required to meet with their department adviser within the first two semesters after declaration or change of major.

## Impacted Program

The rhetoric and writing studies major is an impacted program. To be admitted to the rhetoric and writing studies major, students must meet the following criteria:

- Complete preparation for the major;
- Complete a minimum of 60 transferable semester units;
- Have a minimum cumulative GPA of 2.0.

To complete the major, students must fulfill the degree requirements for the major described in the catalog in effect at the time they are accepted into the premajor at SDSU (assuming continuous enrollment).

## Major Academic Plans (MAPs)

Visit <http://www.sdsu.edu/mymap> for the recommended courses needed to fulfill your major requirements. The MAPs website was created to help students navigate the course requirements for their majors and to identify which General Education course will also fulfill a major preparation course requirement.

## Rhetoric and Writing Studies Major

**With the B.A. Degree in Liberal Arts and Sciences  
(Major Code: 15013) (SIMS Code: 112204)**

All candidates for a degree in liberal arts and sciences must complete the graduation requirements listed in the section of this catalog on "Graduation Requirements." No more than 48 units in Rhetoric and Writing Studies courses can apply to the degree.

A minor is not required with this major.

**Preparation for the Major.** Rhetoric and Writing Studies 200 or Journalism and Media Studies 210; Rhetoric and Writing Studies 250. (6 units)

**Language Requirement.** Competency (successfully completing the third college semester or fifth college quarter) is required in one foreign language to fulfill the graduation requirement. Refer to section of catalog on "Graduation Requirements."

**Graduation Writing Assessment Requirement.** Students must have fulfilled the Writing Placement Assessment with a score of 8 or above before taking Rhetoric and Writing Studies 500W or 503W and earn a grade of C (2.0) or better. See "Graduation Requirements" section for a complete listing of requirements.

**International Experience.** The department encourages international experience for its majors. It will facilitate the transfer of rhetoric and writing studies credits for appropriate study abroad, student exchange, or other overseas programs. International internships may also receive rhetoric and writing studies credit, if approved in advance by a department adviser.

**Major.** A minimum of 30 units in rhetoric and writing studies to include 12 units selected from Rhetoric and Writing Studies 411, 500W or 503W, 510, and 498 or 506. The remaining 18 units will be selected from elective courses in the Rhetoric and Writing Studies Department.

## Rhetoric and Writing Studies Minor

(Minor Code: 15013) (SIMS Code: 112220)

Designed for students from across the disciplines, the minor in Rhetoric and Writing Studies provides students with an enhanced awareness of the central role of language and textual practices in every discipline. Thus, both students who want to improve their critical reading, writing, and thinking skills, as well as students interested in pursuing graduate work or entering more writing-intensive professions, will benefit from the minor. The minor includes three core courses intended to introduce students to the study of rhetoric, which incorporates a broad range of topics, including rhetorical theory, cultural rhetoric, and literacy and technology. The minor is also interdisciplinary in nature and includes coursework in rhetoric, communication, linguistics, and education. Students select the courses that best suit their future career and educational goals.

While virtually all professions are enhanced by skills in writing, critical reading, and analytical thinking, the minor is particularly beneficial to students seeking careers in areas such as law, politics, journalism, business, science, engineering, public administration, and education.

The minor in rhetoric and writing studies consists of a minimum of 15 upper division units. Six units must be selected from the core courses, Rhetoric and Writing Studies 411, 500W, 510. The additional nine upper division units must be selected from courses in the Rhetoric and Writing Studies Department.

A minimum of six upper division units must be completed in residence at San Diego State University. In designing the minor, students may not include courses drawn from their major department.

## Professional Writing Certificate

(SIMS Code: 112298)

The purpose of this certificate program is to prepare students for careers in professional writing, or for other careers where advanced writing and document design skills are desirable. The program is designed both for students working on degrees in technical or non-technical fields and for professionals seeking career advancement or change.

Applicants to the program must have excellent general writing skills (in specific cases, applicants may be required to take additional coursework to improve writing proficiency) and basic computer literacy.

Students in the program complete 21 units of coursework approved by the director of the program. A minimum grade point average of 3.0 or better must be maintained in certificate coursework, with no less than a C grade in any course. All courses completed with a grade of B (3.0) or better are applicable to the Master of Arts degree in rhetoric and writing studies with a specialization in technical and professional writing. For further information, contact the Department of Rhetoric and Writing Studies.

**Required courses:** (6 units)

RWS 503W Professional Writing (3)  
RWS 504 Advanced Professional Writing (3)

**Recommended Electives:** (12 units)

RWS 411 Digital Rhetorics (3)  
RWS 501 Editing (3)  
RWS 506 Writing Internship (3) Cr/NC  
RWS 507 Professional Communication in Nonprofit Organizations (3)  
RWS 508W Scientific Writing (3)

Three units of electives (and other elective options) may be selected with the approval of the program director. A maximum of six units of transfer credit may be applied to the program. Students should consult with the program director before selecting any courses so that an individualized program of study can be developed.

## Courses (RWS)

Refer to Courses and Curricula and University Policies sections of this catalog for explanation of the course numbering system, unit or credit hour, prerequisites, and related information.

### EARLY START PROGRAM (Non-Baccalaureate Credit)

Beginning with the class of 2012, the California State University (CSU) has enacted a systemwide mandatory Early Start Program for entering resident CSU freshmen who need remediation in English. Students attending another CSU campus may enroll in the Early Start Program at SDSU. The following course is being offered for service students needing remediation who are enrolling in another CSU campus in the fall semester.

#### ESE 96. Developmental Writing Skills (1) Cr/NC

Prerequisite: A score of 146 and below on the EPT.

Introduction to academic writing, emphasizing purpose, structure, and style of academic essays. Designed to improve student ability to write effective college level prose by developing skills in planning, drafting, and editing essays. Meets CSU Early Start Program requirement for CSU students (not continuing at SDSU).

### LOWER DIVISION COURSES (Non-Baccalaureate Credit)

**NOTE: Rhetoric and writing studies courses numbered below 100 may not be used to satisfy graduation requirements.**

#### RWS 92. Developmental Writing: Fundamentals of Writing (3) Cr/NC

Prerequisite: A score of 146 and below on the EPT.

Academic prose, emphasizing purpose, structure, and style of academic essays. Designed to improve student skills in planning, drafting, revising, editing essays. Open to students who have scored between 142-146 on the EPT and who have not satisfied the SDSU lower division writing competency requirement. Students earning a grade of "Cr" satisfy the SDSU writing competency requirement. Not open to students with credit in Rhetoric and Writing Studies 97. (Formerly numbered Rhetoric and Writing Studies 92A.)

#### RWS 94. Developmental Writing for International or Bilingual Students (3) Cr/NC (Same course as Linguistics 94)

Prerequisites: A score of 146 and below on the EPT, and nonnative English speakers.

Intermediate written English with emphasis on problems of nonnative speakers; discussion of sentence, paragraph, and essay writing skills. Open only to ESL students who have not satisfied the SDSU Writing Competency requirement. Students earning a grade of "Cr" satisfy the SDSU writing competency requirement. Students receiving a "NC" should re-enroll in Rhetoric and Writing Studies 94 [or Linguistics 94].

### **RWS 98. Mini-Course: Selected Topics (1) Cr/NC**

Assorted short courses which will meet three hours a week for five weeks and will cover a variety of academic skills through intensive lectures and laboratory work. Evaluation based on student writing portfolio.

Suggested topics: Research paper, communication skills, research tools, vocabulary development, learning skills, spelling, grammar, and speed reading. See *Class Schedule* for specific content. Credit earned in courses from this series is not applicable to a bachelor's degree.

#### **A. Learning Skills**

### **LOWER DIVISION COURSES** **(Acceptable for Baccalaureate Credit)**

### **RWS 100. Rhetoric of Written Argument (3) [GE]** **(Same course as English 100)**

*International students are advised to take Linguistics 100.*

Prerequisite: Satisfaction of the SDSU writing competency requirement. (See Graduation Requirements section of catalog.) If the EPT is used to satisfy the SDSU writing competency requirement, the required minimum score is 151. Students who score between 147-150 on the EPT enroll in Rhetoric and Writing Studies 101. **Proof of completion of prerequisite required:** Copy of EPT or competency scores or verification of exemption; proof of credit (Cr) in Rhetoric and Writing Studies 92.

Writing and reading as critical inquiry, designed to help students undertake university-level writing projects. Focus on rhetoric of written arguments. Students learn to use sources in their writing and make appropriate decisions about structure, cohesion, and rhetorical conventions. Not open to students with credit in a higher-numbered composition course or Rhetoric and Writing Studies 101 or Africana Studies 120 or American Indian Studies 120 or Chicana and Chicano Studies 111B or English 100 or Linguistics 100.

### **RWS 101. Rhetoric of Written Argument (3) [GE]**

Prerequisite: A score of 147-150 on the EPT. Only for students who have passed the EPT.

Follows the prescribed curriculum in Rhetoric and Writing Studies 100. In addition, students are required to attend eight individual tutoring sessions throughout the semester. Students must be concurrently enrolled in Rhetoric and Writing Studies 103. Not open to students with credit in a higher-numbered composition course or Rhetoric and Writing Studies 100 [or English 100] or Africana Studies 120 or American Indian Studies 120 or Chicana and Chicano Studies 111B or Linguistics 100.

### **RWS 103. Tutorial Support (1) Cr/NC**

Prerequisite: A score of 147-150 on the EPT.

Tutorial support for Rhetoric and Writing Studies 101.

### **RWS 200. Rhetoric of Written Arguments in Context (3) [GE]** **(Same course as English 200)**

*International students are advised to take Linguistics 200.*

Prerequisites: Satisfaction of the SDSU writing competency requirement and Rhetoric and Writing Studies 100 or 101 or Africana Studies 120 or American Indian Studies 120 or Chicana and Chicano Studies 111B or English 100 or Linguistics 100. **Proof of completion of prerequisites required:** Test scores or verification of exemption; copy of transcript.

Further practice in writing, reading, and critical thinking. Emphasis on rhetoric of written arguments in context and using multiple sources in writing. Continued attention to structure, cohesion, and rhetorical conventions. Not open to students with credit in Africana Studies 200, American Indian Studies 225, Chicana and Chicano Studies 200, English 200, or Linguistics 200. Completion of Rhetoric and Writing Studies 200 may require completion of the library workbook assignment.

### **RWS 250. Rhetoric in Everyday Life (3) [GE]**

Prerequisites: Rhetoric and Writing Studies 100 [or English 100]; and Rhetoric and Writing Studies 200 [or English 200] or Journalism and Media Studies 210.

Rhetorical analysis of written, visual, and electronic texts. How rhetorical theories and perspectives help us understand the workings of popular culture, political discourse, visual images, legal arguments, social media, and other texts encountered in everyday life.

### **RWS 253. Grammar and Usage for Writers (3)** **(Same course as Linguistics 253)**

Prerequisite: Passage of EPT.

Instruction in sentence structure with attention to integrating sentences into their logical and rhetorical contexts. Identifying and understanding source of sentence-level writing problems.

### **RWS 279. Introduction to Academic Reading and Writing (3)** **(Offered only at IVC)**

Prerequisite: Open only to students who have score of 4 or less on the Writing Placement Assessment and whose examinations have been formally reviewed.

University-level reading and writing, with emphasis on argumentation, analysis, and learning to write through revision process. Designed for U.S.-resident language minority students.

### **RWS 280. Academic Reading and Writing (3)**

Prerequisite: Score of 6 or below on Writing Placement Assessment (WPA).

Academic prose, emphasizing purposes, structures, and styles of academic writing, with particular emphasis on elements of argument. Designed to improve students' ability to plan, draft, revise, and edit essays, as well as to improve their ability to read and analyze complex academic texts.

### **RWS 281. Academic Reading and Writing for Second Language Learners and International Students (3)** **(Same course as Linguistics 281)**

Prerequisite: Open only to students who qualify for Rhetoric and Writing Studies 280 and whose first language is not English.

Academic prose, emphasizing purposes, structures, and styles of academic English writing. Designed to improve students' ability to plan, draft, revise, and edit essays, as well as to read and analyze complex academic texts. Additional emphasis on grammatical features of English relevant to the second language population.

### **RWS 290. Business Writing and Rhetoric (3)**

Prerequisites: Rhetoric and Writing Studies 100 [or English 100] and satisfaction of the SDSU writing competency requirement.

Effective writing and rhetoric in business and organizational settings, including letters, memos, and reports. Features organization, drafting, revision, and editing of documents and presentations. (Formerly numbered Business Administration 290 and Information and Decision Systems 290.)

### **RWS 296. Experimental Topics (1-4)**

Selected topics. May be repeated with new content. See *Class Schedule* for specific content. Limit of nine units of any combination of 296, 496, 596 courses applicable to a bachelor's degree.

### **RWS 299. Special Study (3)**

Prerequisites: Consent of department chair and instructor. Individual Study.

### **UPPER DIVISION COURSES** **(Intended for Undergraduates)**

### **RWS 305W. Writing in Various Settings (3)**

*International students are advised to take Linguistics 305W.*

Prerequisites: Satisfies Graduation Writing Assessment Requirement for students who have completed 60 units; completed Writing Placement Assessment with a score of 8 or higher (or earned a grade of C (2.0) or better in Rhetoric and Writing Studies 280, 281 [or Linguistics 281] if score on WPA was 6 or lower); and completed General Education requirements in Composition and Critical Thinking. **Proof of completion of prerequisites required:** Test scores or verification of exemption; copy of transcript.

Composing effective texts for a wide range of situations in and out of the university. Learning to adjust textual elements for specific purposes, audiences, and settings. Enhances critical reading and writing skills by exploring how content contributes to meaning and effectiveness.

**RWS 390W. Writing in Business Settings (3)**

*International students are advised to take Linguistics 305W.*

Prerequisites: Rhetoric and Writing Studies 290. Satisfies Graduation Writing Assessment Requirement for students who have completed 60 units; completed Writing Placement Assessment with a score of 8 or better (or earned a grade of C (2.0) or better in Rhetoric and Writing Studies 280, 281 [or Linguistics 281] if score on WPA was 6 or lower); and completed General Education requirements in Composition and Critical Thinking. **Proof of completion of prerequisites required:** Test scores or verification of exemption; copy of transcript.

Composing effective texts and presentations for a wide range of audiences, business purposes, genres, and settings. Enhancing critical reading and writing skills by exploring how content contributes to meaning and effectiveness in business documents.

**RWS 411. Digital Rhetorics (3)**

Prerequisite: Completion of the General Education requirements in Composition and Critical Thinking.

Exploration of digital writing and new media literacies from a rhetorical perspective. Includes research on digital rhetoric and history of literacy to investigate new media literacies, texts, and writing practices. (Formerly numbered Rhetoric and Writing Studies 511.)

**RWS 412. Issues in Gender and Rhetoric (3)**

Prerequisite: Completion of the General Education requirements in Composition and Critical Thinking.

Exploration of the intersection of gender, rhetoric, and power. Past and present theories of gender, technology, and visual rhetoric; historical case studies; rhetorics of contemporary scenes.

**RWS 414. Rhetoric in Visual Culture (3)**

Prerequisite: Completion of the General Education requirements in Composition and Critical Thinking.

Rhetorical analysis of visual texts in their social, cultural, and political contexts.

**RWS 496. Topics in Rhetoric and Writing Studies (1-3)**

Selected topics. May be repeated once with new content. See Class Schedule for specific content. Limit of nine units of any combination of 296, 496, 596 courses applicable to a bachelor's degree.

**RWS 498. Seminar: Writing and Research (3)**

Prerequisite: Senior standing.

Synthesis and application of rhetorical concepts and methods used to produce scholarship in the field of rhetoric and writing studies. Includes three major writing and research projects.

**RWS 499. Directed Study (1-3)**

Prerequisites: Consent of instructor and approval of department chair.

Individual study. Maximum credit six units.

**UPPER DIVISION COURSES  
(Also Acceptable for Advanced Degrees)**

**RWS 500W. Advanced Writing Strategies (3)**

Prerequisites: Satisfies Graduation Writing Assessment Requirement for students who have completed 60 units; completed Writing Placement Assessment with a score of 8 or higher (or earned a grade of C (2.0) or better in Rhetoric and Writing Studies 280, 281 [or Linguistics 281] if score on WPA was 6 or lower); and completed General Education requirements in Composition and Critical Thinking. **Proof of completion of prerequisites required:** Test scores or verification of exemption; copy of transcript.

Advanced writing course focusing on how meaning is negotiated and claims are argued in academic and public discourse.

**RWS 501. Editing (3)**

Prerequisite: Graduate standing or Rhetoric and Writing Studies 200 [or English 200] or 250.

Fundamentals of professional editing. Functions of an editor. Document development, style, and style guides. Editing tools and technologies. Preparing text for publication and production.

**RWS 503W. Professional Writing (3)**

Prerequisites: Satisfies Graduation Writing Assessment Requirement for students who have completed 60 units; completed Writing Placement Assessment with a score of 8 or higher (or earned a grade of C (2.0) or better in Rhetoric and Writing Studies 280, 281 [or Linguistics 281] if score on WPA was 6 or lower); and completed General Education requirements in Composition and Critical Thinking. **Proof of completion of prerequisites required:** Test scores or verification of exemption; copy of transcript.

Principles and practices of professional writing, including clear and concise style and rhetorical strategies of designing effective workplace documents. Practice composing memos, reports, proposals.

**RWS 504. Advanced Professional Writing (3)**

Prerequisite: Rhetoric and Writing Studies 500W, 503W, or graduate standing.

Advanced principles in professional writing, including user and task analysis for interface design; document design and typography; collaboration and interpersonal communication; ethical and cultural issues; usability testing; and small group management.

**RWS 506. Writing Internship (3) Cr/NC**

Prerequisites: Rhetoric and Writing Studies 500W or 503W. Admission to a minor, major, certificate, or graduate program in rhetoric and writing studies.

Intensive experience in writing and editing documents while student is under the joint supervision of an academic instructor and a professional coordinator.

**RWS 507. Professional Communication in Nonprofit Organizations (3)**

Prerequisites: Rhetoric and Writing Studies 200 [or English 200] and 250. Upper division or graduate standing.

Developing specific technical communication skills for nonprofit organizations. Learning nonprofit documentation: proposals, mission statements, advertising, member surveys, capital campaigns. Promoting volunteerism. Interacting with nonprofit boards. Adhering to requisite state and federal regulations.

**RWS 508W. Scientific Writing (3)**

Prerequisites: Satisfies Graduation Writing Assessment Requirement for students who have completed 60 units; completed Writing Placement Assessment with a score of 8 or higher (or earned a grade of C (2.0) or better in Rhetoric and Writing Studies 280, 281 [or Linguistics 281] if score on WPA was 6 or lower); and completed General Education requirements in Composition and Critical Thinking. Admission to a minor, major, certificate, or graduate program in rhetoric and writing studies. **Proof of completion of prerequisites required:** Test scores or verification of exemption; copy of transcript.

Scientific writing in academic and empirical research settings to include clear and concise writing style, rhetorical strategies, and writing of research reports, proposals, conference presentations, and articles.

**RWS 509. Teaching Composition in Secondary Schools (3)**

Prerequisite: Rhetoric and Writing Studies 200 [or English 200] or graduate standing.

Theory and practice of teaching and assessing composition in secondary schools and comparable contexts.

**RWS 510. Rhetoric and Culture (3)**

Interplay of rhetoric, writing, and culture, including race/ethnicity, gender, class, and other cultural considerations. Role of texts in shaping and shifting community knowledge, identity, norms, and values.

## Rhetoric and Writing Studies

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### **RWS 512. Writing Center Practice, Research, and Theory (3)**

Prerequisite: Rhetoric and Writing Studies 200 [or English 200] with a grade of C (2.0) or better or satisfaction of Graduation Writing Assessment Requirement.

Practice, research, and theory of coaching writing in various settings. Individual and small group writing projects and research. Maximum credit six units.

### **RWS 596. Special Topics in Rhetoric and Writing Studies (1-3)**

Prerequisite: Consent of instructor.

Selected topics in rhetoric and writing studies. May be repeated with new content and consent of instructor. See *Class Schedule* for specific content. Limit of nine units of any combination of 296, 496, 596 courses applicable to a bachelor's degree. Credit for 596 and 696 applicable to a master's degree with approval of the graduate adviser.

### **RWS 599. Special Study (1-3) Cr/NC**

Directed individual study. Maximum credit six units.

### **GRADUATE COURSES** Refer to the *Graduate Bulletin*.

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