Overview for Spring 2024 Courses

Below, you'll see the **WRTC Major/Minor Courses offered for Spring 2024**, including what's being offered, when, and how each class will be taught.

SPRING 2024 WRTC COURSES

COURSES FULFILLING CORE REQUIREMENTS ** offered each semester
WRTC 200 — MWF 9:10 – 10:00 Intro to WRTC studies Seán McCarthy
WRTC 200 — TR 11:10 – 12:25 Intro to WRTC studies Susan Ghiaciuc
WRTC 300 — TR 9:35 - 10:50 Professional Editing Karen McDonnell
WRTC 300 — MW 3:25 - 4:40 Professional Editing Scott Lunsford
WRTC 301 — TR 12:45 - 2:00 Language, Law and Ethics Karen McDonnell
WRTC 301 — MW 9:35 - 10:50 Language, Law and Ethics Susan Ghiaciuc
WRTC 316 — MW 1:50 - 3:05 Research Methods in WRTC Alex Parrish
WRTC 316 — TR 2:20 - 3:35 Research Methods in WRTC Mollie Stambler
WRTC 495 — Online WRTC Internship Jen Almjeld
WRTC 496 — MWF 12:40 - 1:30 WRTC Capstone Scott Lunsford
WRTC 496 — TR 11:10 – 12:25 WRTC Capstone Jim Zimmerman

REQUIRED FOUNDATION COURSE — TSC (Offered Each Semester)
WRTC 350 — TR 11:10 - 12:25 Foundations of Tech Comm Cynthia Martin

REQUIRED FOUNDATION COURSE — WR
WRTC 330 — MW 4:10 - 5:00 Virtual on Friday. Rhetorical Analysis and Criticism Alex Parrish

COMMUNITY-BASED LEARNING
WRTC 486 — TR 9:35 – 10:50 Writing in the Community Jen Almjeld
WRTC 484 — MW: 10:20 - 11:10 F Virtual Writing for Nonprofits Michael Hickman

CROSSOVER ELECTIVES
WRTC 328 — Tuesday 3:55 - 6:25 Séan McCarthy
WRTC 328 — TR 12:45 - 2:00 JMUR Kevin Jefferson
WRTC 328 — MW 12:40 - 1:30 RhetTech Editors Anna Maria
     Johnson
WRTC 426/1 — TR 2:20 - 3:35 Designing for Cultures, Audiences, and Communities Ja'la
     Wourman [[CAN ALSO BE USED AS TSC ELECTIVE]]
WRTC 426/2 — TR 2:20 - 3:35 Rhetorics of Disability Representations Susan Ghiaciuc

TSC ELECTIVES
WRTC 340 — MWF 9:10 - 10:00 Writing as Leading James Zimmerman
WRTC 354 — MW 3:25 - 4:40 Document Design Cynthia Martin
WRTC 358 — TR 12:45 - 2:00 Scientific and Medical Communication Michael Klein
WRTC 412 — MW 9:35 - 10:50 Content Strategy Angela Crow
WRTC 454 — TR 9:35 - 10:50 Publication Management Lori Beth DeHertogh

WR ELECTIVES

WRTC 334 MW 3:00 - 3:50 Friday Virtual Intro to Popular Writing Jay Varner
WRTC 336 MW 8:45 - 10:00 Writing Consultation Kevin Jefferson
WRTC 432 MW 1:50 - 2:40 Rhetoric Personal Narrative Heather Comfort

Time	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
Online, Asynchronous	495 Almjeld	495 Almjeld	495 Almjeld	495 Almjeld	495 Almjeld
8:45 - 10:00	336 Jefferson		336 Jefferson		
9:10 - 10:00	200 McCarthy 340 J Zimmerman		200 McCarthy 340 J Zimmerman		200 McCarthy 340 J Zimmerman
9:35 - 10:50	301 Ghiaciuc 412 Crow	300 McDonnell 454 De Hertogh	301 Ghiaciuc 412 Crow	300 McDonnell 454 De Hertogh	
10:20 - 11:10	484 Hickman		484 Hickman		484 Hickman Virtual
11:10 - 12:25		200 Ghiaciuc 350 Martin 496 J Zimmerman		200 Ghiaciuc 350 Martin 496 J Zimmerman	
12:40 – 1:30	496 Lunsford 328 Johnson		496 Lunsford 328 Johnson		496 Lunsford
12:45 - 2:00		301 McDonnell 328 Jefferson 358 Klein		301 McDonnell 328 Jefferson 358 Klein	
1:05 – 2:40					
1:50 - 2:40	432 Comfort		432 Comfort		432 Comfort
1:50 – 3:05	316 Parish		316 Parish		

2:20 - 3:35		316 Stambler 426 Ghiaciuc 426 Wourman		316 Stambler 426 Ghiaciuc 426 Wourman	
3:00 – 3:50	334 Varner		334 Varner		334 Varner Virtual
3:25 – 4:40	300 Lunsford 354 Martin 486 Almjeld		300 Lunsford 354 Martin 486 Almjeld		
3:55 - 5:10		328 McCarthy **3:55 - 6:25**			
4:10 – 5:00	330 Parrish		330 Parrish		330 Parrish Virtual
5:00 – 6:15					

SPRING 2024 WRTC COURSES, Alternative Descriptions

Please do read the official University Catalogue Description for WRTC courses at the links provided below or at the archived catalogs associated with your year of entry. The descriptions provided here are from the professor teaching each class; in these descriptions, they elaborate on the course description and offer particulars for their sections. If you have questions, please don't hesitate to ask your advisor!
For the official course description, please see your year in the University Catalog.
For 2023/24: https://catalog.jmu.edu/preview_program.php?catoid=51&poid=22407
https://catalog.jmu.edu/preview_program.php?catoid=51&poid=22408

CORE

WRTC 200 Intro to Studies in WRTC

MWF 9:10 – 10:00 Seán McCarthy
TR 11:10 – 12:25 Susan Ghiaciuc

Overview:
In this class, you'll get to dip your toe into all things WRTC! You'll learn just enough about the issues, topics, and skills we teach to design your perfect path through the major or minor program. You'll also do a passion project–something you want to do for your own growth and development as a writer–all semester long!

Projects/tasks:
The projects in WRTC 200 are all about you. In one major assignment, you will design your perfect path through the major, or minor including which classes you will take, your dream internship and other professional development goals, the extracurricular and cocurricular opportunities you'll take on–it'll be space to dream big.

A huge part of 200, though, is your course project. Have you dreamed of a website or blog you could put together? An activist writing project that would live across platforms? An idea for an amazing app? 200 is the place to dream big, roll up your sleeves, and give it a go in a supportive environment of professors and peers.

Why you would take it:
Just getting started in your WRTC journey? This class is going to give you the lay of the land and build your confidence so that you will be ready to take on other classes in the major. It'll also give you your first strong portfolio piece.

WRTC 300 Professional Editing

TR 9:35 - 10:50 Karen McDonnell
MW 3:25 - 4:40 Scott Lunsford

Overview:
The best ideas are lost on an audience if the expression of those ideas is unclear. WRTC 300 assists students in honing their grammar skills and writing style. At the same time, students learn tricks of the trade, including hard copy markup, electronic editing tools, style guides, and more!

Projects/tasks:
You'll edit a variety of documents, which may include Wikipedia articles, movie reviews, instruction sets, or user manuals. The semester culminates in a project that requires students to comprehensively edit a longer document, create a cover and table of contents, apply original styles for headings, and add creative commons-licensed photos.

Why you would take it:
This is a required core course in the WRTC major and minor, but beyond that, students love the hands-on nature of the coursework. Students leave class feeling confident in their writing abilities and prepared to embark on a career in editing or publishing if desired.

WRTC 301 Language, Law and Ethics
TR 12:45 - 2:00 Karen McDonnell
MW 9:35 - 10:50 Susan Ghiaciuc

Overview:
The power of law hinges on argument, context, and interpretation. From daily decisions in the community and workplace to cases before the Supreme Court, ethical and legal decisions have far-reaching impacts and can generate controversy and confusion in their wake. In this course, we'll grapple with these complexities and come to a greater understanding of our rights and responsibilities.

Projects/tasks:
Throughout the semester, students engage in discussions and analysis of the rhetorical frameworks under which the law is determined and interpreted. Whether considering a code-of-ethics violation or analyzing court cases, we examine the limits and potential of law in daily life. Students are responsible for leading topic-driven discussions and composing two case studies that demonstrate their understanding of how language, law, and ethics intersect.

Why you would take it:
In a democracy, citizens are empowered to govern themselves. WRTC 301 cultivates important knowledge and skills to help us work toward "a more perfect union."

WRTC 316 (replacing 201 in course sequence)
MW 1:50 - 3:05 Alex Parrish
TR 2:20 - 3:35 Mollie Stambler

Overview:

In WRTC 316 you will learn about research practices in our multi-disciplinary field. We equip you to ask good, ethical questions to take on academic and professional issues.

Projects/tasks:
You will have the opportunity to design an empirical research product of your own–one that will be informed by your own library-based research on the topic of your choice. While you will not collect data for this project, it'll be a chance to understand the scope of a research study.

Why you would take it:
This class will make you feel much more confident going into other classes where you will be expected to read, discuss, synthesize, and use WRTC research.

WRTC 495 WRTC Internship.
Online Jen Almjeld

Overview:
In WRTC 495, students report and reflect on their internship experiences with local business, government offices, educational settings and more.

Projects/tasks:
Students produce bi-monthly reports on their 150 internship hours and produce a closeout memo of the experience.

WRTC 496 WRTC Capstone
MWF 12:40 - 1:30 Scott Lunsford
TR 11:10 – 12:25 Jim Zimmerman

Overview:
This is the final course in the major, and it affords students to reflect on the ways they've broadened and deepened their understanding of the theories and practices of written communication, visual design, digital communication and rhetoric in general. The goal of the coursework is the creation of a professional portfolio.

Projects/tasks:
With the end result of a powerful professional portfolio in mind, the assignments in the Capstone are designed to refine, extend, augment, and professionalize whatever academic and professional work the student has already developed. Whether the student intends to pursue a job, a paid internship, or further education, the portfolio will be aimed at demonstrating skills, experience, expertise, and professional potential.

Why you would take it:
This is the final required course in the major.

WRTC 350 Foundations of Tech Comm

TR 11:10 - 12:25 Cynthia Martin

Overview:
Technical Communication falls into three categories: writing about technical and scientific topics, writing in and for online spaces, and creating user documentation (STC site — Defining Tech Comm). You'll gain a broad introduction to these three genres of communication in this class.

Projects/Tasks:
You'll design a graphic that conveys data in an ethical manner, develop an instruction set and conduct a usability test, and work as part of a team to write a report on a technological or scientific issue.

Why you would take it:
This course will prepare you for work in upper-level WRTC courses and will help you discover potential career interests.

WRTC 330 Rhetorical Analysis and Criticism
MW 4:10 - 5:00 Virtual on Friday. Alex Parrish

COMMUNITY BASED LEARNING

WRTC 486 Writing in the Community
TR 9:35 – 10:50 Jen Almjeld

Overview:
Use your writing skills to partner with local high schoolers from refugee populations to create job search materials and practice professionalization.
Projects/tasks:

Students will mentor high schoolers while creating resumes and cover letters and preparing for interviews.

Why you would take it:
Gain expertise for your own job search after graduation, confidence in teaching writing, and project management skills as we host a mini-job fair.

WRTC 484 Writing for Nonprofits

MW: 10:20 - 11:10 F virtual Michael Hickman
Overview:
In this course, you'll learn about the invaluable role nonprofits play in society. You'll partner with Cat's Cradle (and possibly other nonprofits) to witness the organization's impacts in the community, and you'll analyze how they communicate with stakeholders like donors, grant providers, and the public – all while building your nonprofit writing skills!

Projects/Tasks:

Nonprofits provide a tremendous number of services to the community, and they must communicate well about their organization's value to raise their profile and maintain a healthy donor base. In this class, you will learn about writing grant proposals, develop design skills, create social media posts, and more! You will also have opportunities to meet Cat's Cradle employees and hear about their work with the organization.

Why you would take it:
Nonprofits need skilled writers who can fruitfully engage stakeholders, and this class will give you hands-on, marketable experience with giving back to the community and being responsive to the dynamic nature of these organizations.

CROSSOVER

WRTC 328 Writing and Designing for the Youth Justice System.
Tuesday 3:55 - 6:25 Séan McCarthy
Overview:
This course is designed to prepare students to formulate and effectively communicate possible solutions to the challenges facing the youth justice system, as well as practice evaluating existing and past policies in light of theory and current research.

Projects/Tasks:
Students will work directly with youth justice practitioners to identify weaknesses and problems of today's juvenile justice and other youth-serving systems and suggest alternatives and ways to address these problems. Students will gain experience writing in a number of genres, collaborating on diverse teams, and learning and applying marketable design and innovation methods.

Why you would take it:
This 3-credit course will be of interest to students taking the Writing for Law and Society track and will also count as a cross-over elective.

WRTC 328 JMURJ
WRTC 328 — TR 12:45 - 2:00 Kevin Jefferson

Instructor consent required to register for this course
Overview:
Allows students to engage in practical experience opportunities in the field of Writing, Rhetoric, and Technical Communication. Students may apply no more than 3 practicum credit hours toward completion of WRTC major or minor requirements.

WRTC 328 *RhetTech* Editors
WRTC 328 — MW 12:40 - 1:30 Anna Maria Johnson

Overview:

Since 2017, WRTC students have edited a national journal for undergraduate students in writing, rhetoric, and technical communication-related disciplines. The editors favor relevant, timely, and culturally-responsive multimodal compositions. This class is your opportunity to join the group of RhetTech editors in the production of volume six. We will start out the term reviewing submissions, then we'll work with authors to polish and publish their work in the new volume of RhetTech!

Projects/tasks:
You can expect to review submissions from your peers at JMU and other universities, correspond with authors throughout the revisión process, and edit the final versions. Some students may choose to do graphic design work for the volumen while others will copyedit. In addition, some students may choose to promote the journal through social media accounts and other means for marketing a publication.

Why you would take it:
Please check out previous volumes! RhetTech provides many opportunities for student editors to gain insider experience in the publication process—from selecting pieces and giving feedback, to revising and editing, and finally, layout and design. You will also learn to market and promote the journal.

WRTC 426 Designing for Cultures, Audiences, and Communities
TR 2:20 - 3:35 Ja'la Wourman [[CAN ALSO BE USED AS TSC ELECTIVE]]
Overview:
This class is a bridge between the designer/creative in you, with an interest in learning more about how communication happens across cultures, platforms, and products. From a rhetorical perspective, you'll learn about issues surrounding race, gender, and socio-economic status as it relates to how things are created and then perceived once distributed to public audiences.

Projects/tasks:
The projects in 426 will be both individual and collaborative. In one assignment as you learn how to rhetorically decipher images, messages, and designs; as a class, we will create a style guide that is inclusive and accounts for inclusive representation. For the final major assignment, you will pick an issue discussed throughout the semester (or propose your own) and design a digital social awareness campaign and present to the class.

Why you would take it:
This class would be a great option for anyone with an interest in visual communication, multimedia, design, and cultures. It is a great option for any WRTC major or minor regardless of where you are in the program. Ultimately, you will leave the semester with a solid foundation on how to be more culturally aware and in tune when creating written and visual campaigns for diverse audiences.

WRTC 426 Rhetorics of Disability Representations
TR 2:20 - 3:35 Susan Ghiaciuc

Overview:

The portrayal of disability in popular media often draws from recurring tropes that place value on the disabled based on their relationship to normative ideals, such as the hero who transcends their disability to achieve extraordinary things or the person who learns to

live life to the fullest after caring for a disabled friend.

Projects/Tasks:
In this class students will develop a baseline understanding of the history of disability studies and the concepts and controversies that comprise current research and scholarship in the field, both nationally and internationally. Students will then apply this knowledge to the examination of work in various media, subsequently developing personal projects focusing on work/s of their choice (film, television, graphic novels, etc.), to be presented in an accessible format (including image description, captions, presentation transcripts, etc.).

Why you would take it:
A final component of this course will be an extended film analysis project in collaboration with students at Universidad Nacional del Litoral, Argentina.

TSC ELECTIVES

WRTC 340 — Writing as Leading
MWF 9:10 - 10:00 James Zimmerman

Overview:
All leadership has its basis in some form of writing, whether it's obvious or not. Leaders prepare "off the cuff" remarks by writing beforehand. Those who are "good at thinking on their feet" actually anticipate and practice answers to questions and situations they know will come. All leadership effectiveness is based on an understanding of "followership" and the "whys" of target audiences.

Projects/Tasks:
Memo, news release, social media exercises, research report, mission and vision statements, white paper, op-ed.

Why you would take it:
You will need to be a leader in your professional life sooner than you think, and you will certainly need to understand what leaders at all levels are trying to do as you progress through your career. Although the forms and even the content of leadership communication keeps changing, the fundamental principles are a constant: limited, clear purposes, concern for your audiences, and continuous monitoring and adjustment regarding the effects of the communication.

WRTC 354 — Document Design
MW 3:25 - 4:40 Cynthia Martin

Overview:
This course introduces theories and best practices of design in print and online environments. You'll learn how to use industry-standard design software, including Adobe and Affinity applications.

Projects/Tasks:
You'll design a personal logo and business card, create a print flier and companion social media post, and design a feature spread for a magazine of your choice.

Why you would take this course:
Writers and editors need to know how to design a reader-friendly documents for a range of rhetorical situations. You'll leave this course with design skills that are in high demand in the workplace and an understanding of what makes design usable and accessible.

WRTC 358 Scientific and Medical Communication
TR 12:45 - 2:00 Michael Klein

WRTC 412 Content Strategy
MW 9:35 - 10:50 Angela Crow

Overview:
Kristina Halverson defines content strategy as the ongoing practice of planning for the creation, delivery, and governance of useful, usable, and effective content about a particular topic or set of topics. In this class, we'll move between the underlying theories about content strategy and the practical applications.

Projects:
We'll work with two "hands on" projects that will help you to develop the vocabulary, the tools, and the mindset of a content strategist.

Why you would take it:
If you're interested in jobs where you would write in a range of media online (social media, video, websites, apps), you will want a familiarity with approaches to content strategy.

WRTC 454 Publication Management
TR 9:35 - 10:50 Lori Beth DeHertogh

Overview:
A quick job search reveals that publication managers are well-compensated and in high demand. In this class, you'll develop writing, leadership, and organizational skills that prepare you to step into a publication and content management role upon graduation.

WR ELECTIVES

WRTC 334 Intro to Popular Writing
MW 3:00 - 3:50 Friday Virtual Jay Varner

Overview: Students will read, analyze, and produce different examples of writing genres from popular publications with the goal of acquiring a critical understanding of the rhetorical aims and practices of popular writing.

Projects/Tasks: Students will write criticism, essays, and articles. Through peer workshops and professor feedback, students will revise their writing and leave with a portfolio that reflects their versatility as a popular writer.

Why You Should Take It: You'll be reading the writing the type of texts that are amongst the most widely read and impactful in today's society. This is a great chance to experiment, to learn some writing techniques, and, most of all, to explore your voice and style. We'll also have class visits from professional writers.

WRTC 336 Writing Consultation
MW 8:45 - 10:00 Kevin Jefferson

WRTC 432 Rhetoric of the Personal Narrative
MW 1:50 - 2:40 Heather Comfort

Overview:
In this course, we will examine personal narrative essays from contemporary creative nonfiction writers who write for a wide array of publications, and essays from writers who helped define the genre. You will create and workshop your own personal narrative essays. By the end of the semester, you will have examples of writing that you can publish and add to your professional portfolio.

Projects/tasks:
We will read and discuss examples of the personal narrative essay and texts that explore the rhetorical purposes of the genre. Informal writing assignments, including in-class generative writing, will build towards more formal essay assignments. We will use a variation of the creative writing workshop model, and we will focus on writing as an ongoing process.

Why you would take it:
When you explore different writing genres, you become a more flexible writer. This will open more doors for you. Potential employers want versatile writers. But most importantly, this writing genre will help you grow as a writer and expand your empathy. I'm teaching this class, because this is a class I would want to take as a student!

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For 2023/24: