

WRTC Undergraduate Course Offerings

Spring 2010

Take a Look. There are a number of exciting new courses!

WRTC 200: Introduction to Writing, Rhetoric, and Technical Communication

Introduces students to the field of writing, rhetoric, and technical communication. Emphasis is placed on the history of writing as a technology. Primary topics include the role of rhetoric in academic, professional, and public writing contexts; writing for digital environments; and writing for and designing print and online publications.

MWF 10:10-11:00 T. Zimmerman; TTh 11:00-12:15 Burton; TTh 3:30-4:45 J. Zimmerman

WRTC 210: Introduction to Technical and Scientific Communication

Introduction to the central components of technical and scientific communication, including technical summaries, definitions, descriptions, instructions, reports, correspondence and proposals. Examines the process of planning, researching, producing and revising technical and scientific communications attuned to specific audiences and directed by clearly defined purposes.

Multiple Sections

WRTC 211: Written Argumentation

Offering students a strong theoretical foundation in rhetoric, this advanced course exposes students to both ancient writing strategies and fresh voices. Emphasis will be given to classical and contemporary rhetorical theory as applied to the cultural, historical, disciplinary and professional bases for written communication. Students apply the teachings of rhetorical scholars to current discourse and contemporary issues. Emphasis is also given to rhetorical grammar—an innovative way of thinking about grammatical choices and the effects of style and mechanics on audiences. Larger philosophical questions about the nature of language, discourse, and society are also explored. Coursework includes opinion pieces, persuasive narratives, reflection & analysis, descriptive writing, invention exercises, and extensive readings. An advanced course in the development and analysis of argumentative strategies across a range of academic, professional and popular writing contexts.

MW 3:35-4:50 Schubert; TTh 2:00-3:15 Schubert

WRTC 220: Rhetorical Traditions

An introduction to historical rhetoric and its relationship to reading, writing, and speaking in modern contexts. Emphasis will be placed on defining rhetoric -- its traditions, terms, and enduring realms of influence.

MWF 10:10-11:00 Jones; MWF 1:25-2:15 T. Zimmerman; TTh 11:00-12:15 Gunnior

WRTC 230: Research in Technical and Scientific Communication

Introduction to research methodologies used in technical and scientific communication, covering techniques for collecting information or data through primary and secondary sources. Includes evaluation of information from print and online sources for accuracy, usefulness and credibility, as well as the skillful integration of source material into reports. Fulfills the College of Arts and Letters writing-intensive requirement for the major. Prerequisite or corequisite: WRTC 210.

TTh 12:30-1:45 Philbin

WRTC 240: Technical and Scientific Editing

Introduction to the central responsibilities of editors when guiding a document through the editorial process, including establishing the need, purpose and scope of a document; developing levels of edit; copyediting; conducting substantive edits; determining document design; editing graphic aids; collaborating with authors; and proofreading. Prerequisite or corequisite: WRTC 210.

MW 3:35-4:50 Allen; TTh 2:00-3:15 Allen

WRTC 295: Popular Writing

The secret of popular writing is never to put more on a given page than the common reader can lap off it with no strain whatsoever.

One of the implicit values of academia is academic writing. As scholars, we depend on scholarly sources, as well as institutional, industrial, and government expertise. We tend to follow the lead of the poet Ezra Pound in our judgment of popular writing as “common,” second-class, disposable. In a university setting, the popular is largely unpopular. And yet, perhaps more than ever before, we are surrounded by writing aimed at popular audiences. Contrary to Pound’s formula, Popular Writing—the writing we encounter everywhere from the grocery check-out to our televisions to the blogosphere—has its own set of rhetorical considerations, its own language of expertise. And with the growing presence of the Web, Popular Writing is also a growing career field. WRTC 295 provides a theoretical and practical overview of this field. Students will analyze a broad range of texts, including advertisements, newspapers, magazines, popular fiction, and scripts, with the goal of increasing their awareness of a broadly defined rhetoric that emphasizes audience consideration. They will also study the impacts of media, technology, and popular culture on the field. At the same time, students will produce their own writing, developing a portfolio that represents diverse popular genres.

MWF 9:05-9:55 Henderson; MWF 12:20-1:10 Henderson

WRTC 310: Studies in Literacy

Textbooks, handwriting, video games, diaries, text messaging, note-passing, comic books, standardized tests, music, sports, classic literature, cooking, or twittering. Which ones of these count as valid literacies? Should literacy be a qualitative or quantifiable activity? Who decides and why does it matter? Studies in Literacy helps students conceptualize and investigate how literacy operates in and out of school-based settings, as well as in some of their pleasurable and mundane daily activities. Through selected texts, in-class discussion, and critical, reflective writing this course will pursue multiple lines of inquiry: Why is the term literacy so frequently equated with learning to read? Why do so many individuals have fonder memories of learning to read than learning to write? Where do we find legal definitions of literacy and why are our own definitions often at odds with legally sanctioned ones? How do our personal and communal histories condition our answers to all these questions? WRTC 310 is an advanced research and writing course designed to explore the important role that literacy plays in society. Students will examine the concept of literacy through historical, political, sociological, educational and cross-cultural lenses.

TTh 2:00-3:15 Ghiaciuc; TTh 5:00-6:15 Wright

WRTC 320: Writing in the Public Sphere

Students will study and learn to write texts that influence and change public life. Come be a part of it.

MWF 12:20-1:10 Lambert

WRTC 322: Making a Difference – Service Learning Writing

What is community? What is *this* community? What is my role as a citizen? What are the qualities of a leader? What motivates people to live lives of service? How should I live my life? WRTC 322, Service Learning Writing, explores these and other questions through community service, readings, discussions, and a variety of writing: creative, exploratory and transactional. This is a writing intensive course.

TTh 2:00-3:15 O'Connor

WRTC 322: Service Learning in Belize

Travel to Belize and tell your story! Before the trip, we will learn about travel narratives and the culture of Belize. During spring break, we will travel to Belize to do service work and experience the culture of Belize first hand. After the trip, students will create polished narratives to submit for publication.

MW 3:35-4:50 Featherstone

WRTC 325: Rhetoric and Practice of the Personal Narrative

This course introduces students to the personal essay within the broader context of creative nonfiction writing. Students will read personal essays as well as longer memoirs. They will explore creative nonfiction techniques such as scene, dialogue, conflict, character development, and sensory detail. Students will compose their own narratives through in-class and out-of-class writing exercises and through longer compositions. We will examine works written by a variety of authors, including Dave Eggers, Annie Dillard, David Sedaris, and Jo Ann Beard.

MW 5:00-6:15 Comfort

WRTC 330: Intercultural Technical and Scientific Communication

Intercultural Technical and Scientific Communication is designed to broaden students' understanding of the impact culture has—not only on professional communication but on every facet of our daily lives. Students work with basic models of culture developed mostly in business environments. They also discuss those considerations of most value to technical communicators: audience, purpose, rhetorical context, translation concerns, graphics, document and web page design, teamwork, management issues, etc. Concurrently, the course is also designed to enhance students' understanding of American culture. A better understanding of our own culture is a crucial element in a course like this one. Certainly we seek to understand how others cultures operate, but how successful can our communications be if we don't understand how our own culture operates? If we fail to comprehend how our own words and actions are interpreted by others, we run the risk of being misunderstood. And, in today's world, misunderstanding can generate dangerous consequences.

TTh 12:30-1:45 Bednar

WRTC 331: Technology and Writing

Do you have a Facebook page? Do you follow someone's blog? In this course, we'll examine the way these and other technologies affect the way we read, write, and interact with one another. From the invention of writing, to moveable print, to the personal computer, to iPhones, we'll examine instances when innovative techniques shaped the way we communicate. Students will have a chance to use some of these technologies as they complete assignments and interact with their classmates.

MWF 10:10-11:00 Klein

WRTC 340: Teaching Writing

Teaching Writing will introduce students to the current pedagogies of teaching writing. The word "pedagogy" denotes both the *theory* and the *practice* of writing. It refers to the broad underlying *philosophy* of teaching and to the specific *methods* writers and teachers employ to put that philosophy into action. Thus class readings will provide historical, theoretical, and methodological contexts for both writing and teaching writing, while the projects will provide opportunities to put into practice or "try out", if you will, the many theories and methods we will discuss throughout the semester.

MWF 12:20-1:10 Jones; TTh 3:30-4:45 Martin

WRTC 343: Contemporary Rhetorical Theory

A research-infused course that familiarizes students with the major theories, trends, and figures in contemporary rhetoric. Students will study the foundational principles of contemporary rhetorical theory and their applications in academic, professional, and civic contexts. Prerequisite: WRTC 220 or permission of instructor.

TTh 11:00-12:15 Schick

WRTC 351: Visual Rhetoric

A study of the rhetorical foundations of visual and verbal arguments in academic disciplines and popular culture. Students will analyze and produce visual and verbal arguments in a variety of rhetorical contexts.

TTh 9:30-10:45 Zemliansky

WRTC 355: Digital Rhetoric

A research and writing intensive course devoted to the theory and practice of rhetoric in digital environments. Students will examine current philosophies and approaches to digital and multimedia composing and develop multimedia, multi-genre, and interactive works.

TTh 12:30-1:45 Zemliansky

WRTC 380: Writing as Leading

This course asks a series of interlocking questions: “How do writers lead?”; “How do leaders write, and how do they employ writers?”; “How do readers, listeners, and viewers follow?” Writing that has a purpose of any kind, by definition, attempts to “lead” the target audience. Writers want readers to understand, appreciate, accept, or remember something – or even to change attitudes or behaviors. “Leading by writing” can be found in advertising, agendas, blogs, articles, books, email, legal opinions, legislation, letters to the editor, memos, speeches, websites, and white papers. This course will start with a brief survey of the history of writing-as-leading theory but will move into contemporary examples. Readings will come in many shapes and sizes, including texts generated by students throughout the semester.

MWF 2:30-3:20 J. Zimmerman

WRTC 395 E-Vision Internship

For information, contact Kevin Jefferson at jefferkx@jmu.edu

WRTC 400, Section 0001 : Studies in Harry Potter

In "Critical Perspectives on Harry Potter" we will go beyond interpretive studies of the Harry Potter books themselves and study the entire Harry Potter phenomenon from a rhetorical perspective. The main task during the first part of the course is to examine the critical, scholarly discourse that has emerged as part of that phenomenon. To that end, we will read the critical literature from a wide variety of disciplines (including, law, medicine, philosophy, media studies, business, psychology, etc). During the second part of the semester, we will work on scholarly projects that will contribute to that critical discourse. I would like every student in the class to produce a project, either individually or in collaboration, that can be published in *The Scholar's Wand*, a journal on undergraduate Harry Potter research sponsored by WRTC.

MW 3:35-4:50 Gumnior

WRTC 400, Section 0002 : Writing and Human Development

Writing and Human Development will examine ways writing has evolved as a uniquely human endeavor. We will examine how literacy has affected human thought and behavior. We will explore the shift from orality to literacy, the development of pre- and proto-writing, functions and forms of writing, and development of writing technologies. At each stage, we will examine ways literacy is both a product and an enhancement of our sapient selves. The writing and human development seminar is multi-disciplinary, and we will examine issues through historical, technological, psychological, and anthropological perspectives.

TTh 11:00-12:15 Kessler

WRTC 400, Section 0003: Writing and Illustrating Literature

Collaborate with design students to create graphic novels, children’s books, or visual narratives. This studio course, arranged by JMU’s Institute for Visual Studies (IVS), brings together a writing professor and a design professor to facilitate a project-based course culminating in a public exhibition of student work. For more information, contact Jared Featherstone at feathejj@jmu.edu

TTh 1:30-4:00 Featherstone

WRTC 400, Section 0004: Sports Writing

Sports are an increasingly dominant cultural force in America. As a result, sports writing has expanded its reach and presence – doing more, saying more, and perhaps meaning more than ever before. This course will examine the theory and craft of sports writing, with an emphasis on writing for different audiences: the Web, blogs, books, magazines. Students will critically examine types of sports writing and produce their own, hands-on (“on the field”) pieces across various sports writing genres.

TTh 9:30-10:45 Smith

WRTC 410: Government Writing

WRTC 410, Government Writing, explores how local, state, and national governments communicate with people and how citizens communicate with their governments. Students will examine and analyze webs created by governments, Web-based government communications for their citizens, and print forms of government writing such as illustrated reports (for example, the reports after Hurricane Katrina or the reports generated by the H1N1 virus), white papers, and analyses of political issues.

TTh 5:00-6:15 Philbin

WRTC 440: Proposal Writing

Study of the planning and writing of proposals with emphasis on informal (i.e., business) proposals. Covers proposal strategies that address central components of a successful proposal. Students work on real and client-based proposals. Prerequisites: WRTC 220 or WRTC 230, and WRTC 240, or permission of the instructor.

TTh 9:30-10:45 Pass

WRTC 452: Student Publications

Addresses the management, preparation and editorial policy of professional publications, with an emphasis on participation in the creation of significant technical communication work. Students collaborate on editorial policy and management roles, create publication schedules, review and edit submissions for publication, and collaborate with authors. Students will use Microsoft Project. Prerequisites: WRTC 210 or WRTC 220, WRTC 230, and WRTC 240 or permission of director.

TTh 3:30-4:45 Aley

WRTC 461: Intermediate Topics in Online Publications

Intermediate study of online publications, building upon the skills and knowledge gained in WRTC 460. Emphasizes the tools for creating, assessing and maintaining electronic data. Prerequisite: WRTC 460 or approval of the director.

MWF 10:10-11:00 Hawthorne

WRTC 462: Advanced Topics in Online Publications

Advanced study of online publications. Emphasizes advanced design and coding techniques using current materials and skills. Prerequisite: WRTC 461 or approval of the director.

MWF 2:30-3:20 Hawthorne

WRTC 480, Section 0001: Writing About Science and Nature

Science and nature writing, while seeing nature with precision, ultimately circles through human emotions and explores what we are as much as what nature is. It imaginatively explores the intersection between the external world of nature and the internal world of the human spirit.” – Richard Preston

In this course, we will study and produce pieces that seek to balance (or even to marry) the technical and the scientific, with the expressive, with the demands of story and storytelling. This course will emphasize methods for creating finished, publishable essays, research reports, and journal articles about new research, theories, projects, trends, and personalities in science and technology.

MW 5:00-6:15 Smith

WRTC 480, Section 0002: Review Writing

This special topics course, offered in the School of Writing, Rhetoric and Technical Communication, focuses on elements of rhetoric crucial to writing reviews of various kinds. The course emphasizes the importance of accurately analyzing an audience, thinking critically, providing convincing detail, and substantiating an opinion. Students in the course write and revise a variety of reviews, with an eye toward publication in campus and community outlets. Possible topics include books, movies, television programs, music, live performances, web pages, software, products, restaurants, and the like.

TTh 3:30-4:45 Bednar

WRTC 482: Advanced Web Theory and Design

Advanced study of Web theory and design. Focuses on the business of Web design. Emphasizes theories of evaluating, revising and maintaining Web sites; searching for the Web developer job; negotiating client contracts; creating the Web team; managing the Web project; and learning the advantages and disadvantages of various technological tools technical communicators use on the job. Prerequisite: WRTC 481 or approval of the instructor.

TTh 11:00-12:15 Pass

WRTC 495: Internship