

Spring 2011

Instructor: Tekla Schell

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Meeting Times: MW 11-12:30, FAC 09

Office Hours (Subject to Change): M 1-3, T 2-3 & by appointment, PAR 406

Course #: 44680

Course Webpage:

<https://twsp2011.pbworks.comhttp://instructors.dwrl.utexas.edu/schell/rhe309k>

Course Description:

In our era of franchising and intense audience interactions, both fans and copyright owners regularly transform popular works. To what extent, then, are disputes of copyrights and infringement not simply arguments regarding money, but an indication of larger social anxieties regarding the role of the expert? If fans create re-interpretations more popular than an original text, who or what determines cultural capital? Why are interpretations of media usually accepted in areas such as ballet, drama, or painting, and usually not accepted in others, such as film or novels? What is the rhetorical framework that surrounds accepted (*The Wind Done Gone*, *Wide Sargasso Sea*, *Pride and Prejudice* and *Zombies*, cover bands) and un-accepted (fan fiction, protest art, Girl Talk) reinterpretations?

In this course, students will have the opportunity to examine the questions of authenticity, authority, integrity and copyright surrounding transformative works in current media. We'll investigate the rhetorical frameworks that surround these ideas for different audiences, and try to establish why a particular definition of each concept is "true" or "real" or "authentic" for a particular group. As part of this discussion, the establishment of ideas of expertise and artistry for different communities will be developed through a conception of ideas of community, stakeholders, and stasis theory. Broadly construed in areas of inquiry, students in this class will discuss the areas of their interests using a common vocabulary, and develop research and writing skills appropriate for most academic disciplines.

Because most of the arguments we encounter take place in multiple mediums, we will study rhetorical strategies across many forms and contexts. At the beginning of the semester, you will choose a particular contemporary controversy to follow for the rest of the semester, and utilize the rhetorical tools we'll cover each week to analyze the public debate that surrounds the controversy. At the end of the course, you'll produce a final persuasive argument within the context most appropriate for your controversy.

Reading and Homework Schedule

Please note: assigned readings are listed on the day we will discuss them. Please read them prior to the class period.

Week 1 – What is this stuff?

01/19 - – syllabus and course policy review, introduction to transformative works, introduction to learning record.

Introductory mindmap.

Week 2 – A preliminary framework

Continue explanation of Learning Record, discussion regarding the arguments in transformative works. Explain research summary assignments.

01/24- *EA* CH 1. In class discussion of LR and *EA*

01/26- Fan fiction: Morgan, Rice, Gabaldon, Fforde. In class- summary. In class discussion of *EA*, LR Part A1 due.

Week 3- Transforming texts & contexts

Citation, paraphrasing, quoting, integrating sources. Discussion of participatory culture.

01/31- *EA* Ch. 18-20. LR Part A2 due.

02/02-Selections from Jenkins, *Convergence Culture* and Eberly, *Citizen Critics* (on Blackboard).

Week 4 – Rhetorical Analysis- the basics

Close reading, identifying & developing ethos.

02/07- In class - peer review Research Summary 1

02/09- *EA* CH 5-6, Stein, "This Dratted Thing," (available on Blackboard). Research Summary 1 Due.

Week 5-Research

Aligning your research with audience expectations, using research to develop arguments, keeping track of your research

02/14- Booth Ch.3, 4. In class - mindmaps, beginning library research

02/16- Research continued. Research Summary 2 Due (with comments).

Week 6- Revising Texts, Revising Arguments

Style, reading for context, the work of transformative works

02/21- *EA* CH 13. Jayne Eyre, The Eyre Affair, Wide Sargasso Sea (on Blackboard).

02/23- RIP. Issue Papers Due (written or mm)

Week 7-Persuasion

Finding the right argument for the occasion, audience, and the learning record

02/28- *EA* CH 7, 8 & 15

03/02- *EA* CH 9 & 10. Research Summary 3 Due (with comments).

Week 8- Structuring arguments across media

Continue discussing argument and genre, audience

03/07- *EA* CH 14, *viz*

03/09 – Selection from Miller, *Sound Unbound* (on Blackboard).

03/11- Midterm Learning Records Due

Week 9- SPRING BREAK

03/14- No Class

03/16- No Class

Week 10- Visual Rhetoric

03/21- Paper 1.1 Peer Review.

03/23- Video Remix: Gender & Genre: luminosity, sweetestdrain, sisabet/sweetestdrain co-producers.

Paper 1.1 Due.

Week 11- Arguments across genres, cont.

Arguments of sound and image, explanation of final projects.

03/28- Ringtone Workshop

03/30– Selection from Miller, *Rhythm Science* (on Blackboard). Website evaluation.

Paper 1.2 Due

Week 12 - Common Misunderstandings

Discussion: style vs evidence, presenting counterarguments in multiple media (visual, blog posts, academic papers).

03/04 – EA CH 16

03/06- EA CH 17

Week 13- Call and Response

Discussion: Transformative works and popular media

04/11- Parody, pastiche, homage. *Supernatural* responds to fans. Watch S4.18, "The Monster at the End of this Book."

04/13- Current articles & blogs on transformative works, tbd. Research Summary 4 due (with comments).

Week 14- Structuring Arguments, cont.

04/18- Reid, ["The Hunt for Gollum,"](#) Flegel & Roth, ["Annihilating love and heterosexuality without women."](#)

04/20- **Annotated Bibliography Due**

Week 15- Arguments in Translation

04/25 - In-class presentation

04/27– In-class presentation

Week 16- Revision

05/02 – Final project peer review. Bring copy to class.

05/04 – LAST DAY OF CLASS. Final project due.

Final Learning Record is due finals day

Textbook

Required: *Everything's an Argument 4th ed.*, by John Ruszkiewicz and Andrea Lunsford

Additional Readings will include selections from the following will be provided in-class:

The Craft of Research by Wayne C. Booth, Gregory G. Colomb & Joseph M. Williams

Convergence Culture by Henry Jenkins

Citizen Critics: Literary Public Spheres, by Rosa Eberly

Sound Unbound, Paul Miller, Ed.

Jane Eyre, by Charlotte Bronte

The Eyre Affair, by Jasper Fforde

Wide Sargasso Sea, by Jean Rhys

and additional online links and videos

Course Policies

Grading: This course will be assessed using the Learning Record, a portfolio-based grading system.

Short Assignments: Mindmaps, Blogs and In-Class Writing

As a computer classroom, you will often be required to write online either before class or during class. This online writing may include original compositions, responses to readings or research on an assigned topic.

Participation: Because of the content and size of this class, participation is required. You will need to have all readings and assignments prepared for the class day to which they are assigned. This means you have read and thought about the work in terms of the goals of the class and are ready to discuss these thoughts with your classmates.

Attendance: Please review the attendance policy outlined in the Division of Rhetoric and Writing's policy statement. You are permitted **four absences for any reason—excused or unexcused**—throughout the semester. **A fifth absence results in automatic failure of the course.** If you arrive more than five minutes late, you are considered tardy. **Three tardies will equal one absence** -if you come in late you are responsible for contacting me at the end of class

to make sure your attendance is documented. Furthermore, your presence in class must be conscientious (ie: no cell phones, ipods, emailing, passing notes, talking, sleeping, etc.). Students failing in this respect may be asked to leave and marked as absent on that day.

Technology: This class takes place in a media-assisted classroom and we will use the computers throughout the semester. Nevertheless, only a basic knowledge of hardware and software function is presumed. If at anytime you need assistance with your computer, please ask for help. Use of technology increases the disparity in completion rates in in-class assignments. Should you finish a task before others, please be respectful of your colleagues. Of course, use of technology that impairs your participation in class (such as texting during lecture, reading the newspaper while your colleagues are speaking, etc.) is prohibited (see: Attendance).

“Gifts”: Extenuating circumstances obviously do arise—we get mono, we miss the bus, hard drives crash, etc. I will allow each student one, and only one, “gift” per semester. Students might use this option to, for example, erase a tardy or gain an extra day on a paper. It is at your discretion to decide how best to use this gift, but keep in mind that you get **one** for the entire course—so use it wisely. Attempting to use gifts after turning in the final project is not advised.

Documented Disabilities

The University of Austin provides upon request appropriate academic accommodations for qualified students with disabilities. For more information, contact Services for Students with Disabilities at (512) 471-6259 (voice) or (512) 232-2937 (video phone) or <http://www.utexas.edu/diversity/ddce/ssd>.

A note on email & office hours: I encourage you to email or stop by my office hours if you have any questions. If there is something you aren't quite sure about or need clarification on, keep in mind the assignments for this course build on each other, so ask sooner rather than later. I check my email at least twice a day during the regular semester week, and can normally respond within 24 hours. In order for me to respond to you, please use your full name and a subject line.

Major Assignments

Paper One

General

Your purpose in this 1500-2000 word essay is to discern differences and similarities among those who hold the same position concerning your controversy. You'll do this through the careful (textual and contextual) analysis of a single article advocating this position. Once again, you are not to take a position on this position; your job is not to advocate or evaluate but to analyze and describe. Your audience for this essay will be concerned and interested but not particularly informed citizens who are looking to you for an unbiased presentation of information.

Specifics

In the first few paragraphs, outline the position you'll be examining and state briefly—as a

preview—any significant differences and consistencies you have discerned among those who hold the same position. Then introduce the article you'll be analyzing as an exemplary instance of this position. Be sure to state the full name of the author and the full title of the article in the text and to put the rest of the source information on the Works Cited page.

In the following pages your job is to demonstrate or show the manner in which these similarities and differences manifest themselves through your careful analysis of this selected source. After summarizing what the writer says, noting the central claims and key evidence, analyze how the argument is put together as well as why the writer may have made specific rhetorical choices. You'll want to discern and describe, for example:

- the author's intended audience
- the cultural context in which the text was written (the larger conversation to which this text contributes)
- where the text was published
- the reasons offered in support of the advocated position
- any appeals to the audience's emotions or to the author's credibility
- common rhetorical figures (metaphors, metonymy, synecdoche, etc.) utilized in making the persuasive case
- what's at stake in this argument (what is to be gained or lost in it?)

The goal is to integrate into your analysis the differences and similarities between this source and others who hold the same position. You may find that there are vehement disagreements among those who make up the same "side" of this controversy, that they advocate the same position for very different reasons and in very different ways. You may find that many use the same emotional appeals, similar metaphors, or adopt a similar ethos or tone or style. You may discover that many are explicitly responding to a particular cultural event or to the same author of another text who advocates a different position. Your job in the body of this text is to analyze the key aspects of your selected source in a way that allows you to spotlight these differences and consistencies.

Conclude with a brief reflection on, or reiteration of, what your essay has accomplished.

You must refer to at least 3 sources beyond the one you've chosen to analyze in this essay. Don't forget to document all your sources according to the MLA guidelines.

Minimum Requirements

Your essay must:

- Be 1500-2000 words long, typed, double-spaced; have 1-inch margins and name, class, date at the top left corner of the first page with title centered two lines below the date
- Illuminate significant differences and similarities among those who hold this position
- Strategically and effectively incorporate at least 4 sources, at least two of which are print sources
- Summarize and analyze the article fairly, without advocating or slanting
- Document all sources accurately (in-text and on Works Cited page) according to MLA style guides

- Be written effectively and coherently, with very few punctuation or grammatical errors
- Have been peer reviewed at the in-class workshop
- Be turned in on time and be accompanied by all previous drafts, pre-writing exercises, and written peer reviews

Project Two

In this assignment, you will situate yourself within the "map" of positions on your controversy that you constructed in your earlier papers and produce an argument that advocates a particular position using the persuasive strategies analyzed and studied throughout the semester. When crafting your essay, it is important to acknowledge and answer opposing viewpoints. One rhetorical strategy that must be evident in your argument, therefore, is rebuttal. You must demonstrate an understanding of other positions along with the ability to place your argument in dialogue with these positions.

This assignment has two options:

Option One:

This version of the paper is the scholarly paper; another version of the papers you've been writing all semester. In the first few paragraphs, you will establish the controversy you've been investigating, and outline briefly your position in the controversy. In the next few paragraphs, you will establish the context for your position (historical, textual and personal). You will then use evidence and examples to persuade your audience of the appropriateness of your position. Your audience will be an uniformed but interested and reasonable party.

Minimum Requirements for Option One:

Each essay will:

- Clearly outline the author's position in the controversy
- Integrate a minimum of four sources providing critical evidence and context for its controversy, countering at least one rebuttal argument in a persuasive manner.
- Establish the situation, context and sense of urgency that will convince a reader that this is a critical situation that merits their full attention.
- Be fully peer-reviewed, and be submitted with peer reviews.
- Be 1,500-2,000 words long, formatted according to MLA guidelines, and contain few grammar or spelling errors.

Option Two:

For this option, you may create a text that you feel is most suitable for your controversy; that is, a text will reach the audience most interested in your controversy, and most likely to be persuaded by your text. This text may be a letter to the editor, magazine article, blog post, web site, newspaper article, presentation to a non-profit group, t-shirt line, diorama, fan vid, comic

book, etc. Your format, ethos, logos, and pathos must be suitable for the audience you are targeting. This means you will have to establish good will through identification, shared beliefs, or common goals.

Specifics:

If you choose this option, you will also have to complete a thorough written analysis of your own work, explaining your own rhetorical moves and why they would be persuasive to your target audience, who that audience is, and why you've chosen this type of text as the most effective method of communicating your point of view on the controversy. This written analysis must be at least 1,250 words long, have at least 4 sources (one of which must be a print text), double-spaced, use proper MLA citation, address at least one rebuttal argument, must be fully peer reviewed, and submitted with all peer reviews and drafts.

Research Summaries

Research Summaries, with and without comments.

Assignment Overview: Write a short paper of 500-600 words summarizing a specific source you discovered in your research.

Formatting: Use MLA formatting for your document.

Hit enter twice, and then provide the complete citation information of the text you are summarizing, using the same format as your name information. Set margins at 1 inch, spacing at single, and font at 12 pt.

Specifics: Offer a concise but thorough summary of the position this source is advocating. Stay as close to the text as possible, quoting the author's exact words at times to tie both you and your readers to the original text itself (remember to cite!). Your aim is to hand over to your readers your understanding of WHAT this text is arguing for. Phrases such as "Smith says/notes/states," or "according to Bell," etc. will help you designate what is called intellectual property. You will not have room to cover all the points an author makes, so you will need to synthesize the information for us, tell us what position the author is advocating and then offer quotes from the text itself to demonstrate (to show us) that the author is arguing what you say s/he's arguing. Do not offer your own comments, opinions, or arguments about what the text says, and do not offer a rhetorical analysis of the writing. Stick to content: what is the author saying in this text? What position is s/he advocating? Remember to use proper citations throughout your summary.

Research Summaries (with comments)

Summary Section: See above, but limit your summary to the three-quarters of the page (about 350-400 words).

Comments Section: In the last quarter of the page, briefly analyze the rhetorical approach of this piece (textually and contextually) and point to connections between what this text is arguing for

and what other texts you've read in your research are arguing for—how do they intersect and/or differ? You will likely be asked to examine a particular aspect of rhetoric; be sure to check the syllabus.

Blog Post Guidelines

Since technology and digital literacies are a part of what this class hopes to teach you about, you will be writing a series of four blog posts throughout the semester.

Purpose: The goals of the blog posts are as follows, all of which support the larger goals of the course: to discern the differences between personal writing and writing for academic and other audiences, and show awareness of and aptitude with voice and style appropriate for these audiences, understand the relationship of the visual to the textual, prepare multi-genre projects that embrace academic thinking and prose, sources, personal writing, photography, and multimedia, integrate technology in a rich and meaningful way into the research and writing process, encourage students to write for an audience beyond the classroom.

Details: The blog posts will be a space for you to respond to the readings, and other students' responses to the reading prior to the class period. The posts will help guide the class discussion for the day. In the posts, you can explain your interpretation of a text, connect one text with some of the other readings, work through some of the questions you had about the material, or think about your own writing and research process.

Blog posts will be posted to [our Wordpress blog](#); you will register for accounts in the coming weeks.

Each blog post must contain the following:

- 250-500 words of thoughtful prose about the material.
- A title
- A related image or video (videos may be linked to rather than embedded)

In addition, you must comment in a substantive way to the other blog posts for that day. In other words, you can't say "I agree!" but must respond thoughtfully and constructively to the other posters. Replying to a comment on your own blog will count as half of a response.

You must post your blog posting by 6pm the day before your assigned class period. Responses must be posted by 8am of the class period.