I. General Education Review - Writing Course

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Dept/Program Subject</th>
<th>Department of Applied Arts and Sciences – Writing Studies</th>
<th>Course # (i.e. ENEX 200)</th>
<th>WTS 240</th>
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| Course Title | WTS 240 Rhetoric and Ethics: Writing Arguments About Contemporary Issues |

II. Endorsement/Approvals

Complete the form and obtain signatures before submitting to Faculty Senate Office.

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<tr>
<th>Please type / print name</th>
<th>Signature</th>
<th>Date</th>
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Instructor
Mark Medvetz

Phone / Email
7904   mark.medvetz@umontana.edu

Program Chair
Cathy Corr

III Overview of the Course Purpose/Description:

Provides an introduction to the subject matter and explains course content and learning goals.

As an advance writing course, WTS 240 asks three things of students: to learn and use the techniques of persuasive writing and argumentation, to read critically and strategically, and to write prolifically. These three goals are situated in conversations about contemporary issues and how to approach these issues ethically. Although this is not a formal class in ethical theory, an understanding of commonly used ethical approaches—equal rights, virtue, fairness and justice, and common good—will help students shape discussions and arguments. While constructing verbal and written arguments, students will consider how human values influence their thinking and the positions they take on issues, both locally and globally. Discussions, in-class writing, and completing all required assignments will support student’s development as a well-rounded critical thinker and writer, not only for academic success but also for participation in business and civic communities.

IV Learning Outcomes:

Explain how each of the following learning outcomes will be achieved.

**Student learning outcomes:**
Use writing to learn and synthesize new concepts

**By way of directed annotations, journals, extemporaneous writing, weekly writing assignments, and other informal writing, students will explore and consider a number of topics from an ethical perspective. These writing tasks will allow the students to explore their own ideas, to shape their own thinking, and to enter conversations, both written and verbal, with multiple voices presenting alternative viewpoints.**
| Formulate and express opinions and ideas in writing | Students will  
- Develop a clearly articulated argument representing an ethical or a moral position  
- Use evidence and logical reasoning in support of a point of view  
- Identify relevant objections or alternative points of view  
- Understand argument as something that grows from “truth-seeking” and from an awareness of writing as a social act |
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<tr>
<td>Compose written documents that are appropriate for a given audience or purpose</td>
<td>All writing assignments will include discussions of audience, purpose, and genre, and how each element influences a writer’s rhetorical choices.</td>
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<td>Revise written work based on constructive feedback</td>
<td>Students will receive feedback from faculty, and students will participate in whole-class workshops throughout the semester. The whole-class workshop replaces the small-group model (two or three students working together in small groups), and it is an excellent strategy to present student writing as a primary text. By doing so, students can begin to shape an understanding of the writing process as something beyond “writing” an assignment for the teacher/reader/grader. To this end, students become a real audience, offering comments and advice to a specific writer. The writer begins to understand writing as a matter of making choices and how audience influences that decision-making process. The concepts are reinforced as each audience member becomes the next writer.</td>
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<td>Find, evaluate, and use information effectively (see <a href="http://www.lib.umt.edu/informationliteracy/">http://www.lib.umt.edu/informationliteracy/</a>)</td>
<td>Students will learn not only to find, evaluate, and use information effectively and ethically, but also to develop an analytical model to investigate the construction of information, such as the rhetorical, political, and social forces that shape the making of information.</td>
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Begin to use discipline-specific writing conventions

While the course will build from the rhetorical knowledge gained in WTS/ENEX 101, students will begin to develop a more complex understanding of how to analyze and how to write a formal argument.

Demonstrate appropriate English language usage

Students are required to produce formal writing assignments that adhere to the appropriate standard writing conventions.

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<th>V. Writing Course Requirements Check list</th>
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<td>Is enrollment capped at 25 students?</td>
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<td>If not, list maximum course enrollment.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Explain how outcomes will be adequately met for this number of students. Justify the request for variance.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Are outcomes listed in the course syllabus? If not, how will students be informed of course expectations?</td>
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| Are expectations for Information Literacy listed in the course syllabus? If not, how will students be informed of course expectations? | No
| Students will be required to conduct library research for all formal writing assignments. While doing such research, students will consider how information is constructed and how rhetorical, political, and social forces influence the construction of information. |
| Are detailed requirements for all written assignments included in the course syllabus? If not how and when will students be informed of written assignments? | Yes
| The syllabus provides a brief but complete itemization of all requirements. Students can read Blackboard postings that present a detailed rubric for each assignment. |
| What instructional methods will be used to teach students to write for specific audiences, purposes, and genres? | With minimal time spent delivering information in a lecture style, students will gain more sophisticated rhetorical knowledge and practices by reading the work of published writers as well as reading and commenting on multiple drafts of peer writing. Students will spend a significant amount of time constructing a rhetorical analysis of one written and one visual text with attention to audience, purpose, and genre. |
| Will written assignments include an opportunity for revision? If not, then explain how students will receive and use feedback to improve their writing ability. | Yes |
VI. Writing Assignments: Please describe course assignments. Students should be required to individually compose at least 16 pages of writing for assessment. At least 50% of the course grade should be based on students’ performance on writing assignments. Clear expression, quality, and accuracy of content are considered an integral part of the grade on any writing assignment.

Formal Graded Assignments

- Students will write three formal arguments, and they will be required to rewrite one paper.
  - #1 – 1200 word min.
  - #2 – 1400 word min.
  - #3 – 1600 word min.
  - #2 will require one revision
- Students will complete a detailed rhetorical analysis of
  - one written
  - one visual text
- Students will write a personal essay at the end of the semester based on the “This I Believe” model created by the National Public Radio.

#1

Students will use informal writing exercises and assignments to explore a text and their responses to it as well as to explore their ideas as they build some of them into formal writing responses. Such activities will include in-class free writes, journal entries in response to assigned readings, and weekly one-page responses to a specific topic.

VII. Syllabus: Paste syllabus below or attach and send digital copy with form. The syllabus should clearly describe how the above criteria are satisfied. For assistance on syllabus preparation see: http://teaching.berkeley.edu/bgd/syllabus.html

Paste syllabus here.

UM - Department of Applied Arts and Sciences

WTS 240 Writing Arguments About Contemporary Issues

Mark Medvetz 243-7904
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Office and Office Hours: TBA

"Once the student becomes engaged with the problem of what kind of person to be, and how to become that kind of person, the problems of ethics become concrete and practical and, for many
a student, moral development is thereafter looked on as a natural and even inescapable undertaking."  "Teaching the Virtues" Christina Sommers

In teaching writing, we are not simply offering training in a useful technical skill that is meant as a simple complement to the more important studies of other areas. We are teaching a way of experiencing the world, a way of ordering and making sense of it. James Berlin

**WTS 240 Rhetoric and Ethics: Writing Arguments About Contemporary Issues**

**Course Description and Objectives**
As an advance writing course, WTS 240 asks three things of students: to learn and use the techniques of persuasive writing and argumentation, to read critically and strategically, and to write prolifically. These three goals are situated in conversations about contemporary issues and how to approach these issues ethically. Although this is not a formal class in ethically theory, an understanding of commonly used ethical approaches—equal rights, virtue, fairness and justice, and common good—will help students shape discussions and arguments. While constructing verbal and written arguments, students will consider how human values influence their thinking and the positions they take on issues, both locally and globally. Discussions, in-class writing, and completing all required assignments will support student’s development as a well-rounded critical thinker and writer, not only for academic success but also for participation in business and civic communities.

**Required Text**
1. Although there is no traditional hard-cover text, there is a substantial amount of reading. All readings will be available as electronic documents -- mostly on Blackboard or as a handout.
2. Daily reading of the Missoulian.com, Kaimin, etc.
3. These are optional but essential: dictionary and a writer’s handbook [There will be substantial number of links to general online writing centers as well as specifics links to webpages addressing general and particular writing conventions.]

**Outcomes**
An outcomes statement lists proficiencies that students should attempt to develop and/or improve during the semester.

**Rhetorical Knowledge**
*By the end of the semester, students should*
- Develop a clearly articulated argument representing an ethical or a moral position
- Use evidence and logical reasoning in support of a point of view
- Identify relevant objections or alternative points of view
- Understand argument as something that grows from “truth-seeking” and from an awareness of writing as a social act
**Ethics and Human Values**

*By the end of the semester, students should*

- Begin to understand the norms shared by citizens in modern, secular, and democratic societies
- Demonstrate a working understanding of central and commonly used ethical norms of society, such as equal rights, virtue, fairness and justice, common good, etc.
- Understand the scope and potential impact of possible ethical choices

**Required Work**

- Readings
- Writing
  - Three major writing projects
    - First Argument
    - Second Argument with research option
    - Third Argument with research
    - Final paper/presentation: “This I Believe”
    - Journaling
  - Two to three-page rhetorical analysis
  - Weekly responses
  - Workshopping of major writing assignments
  - One issue or topic contribution to a Blackboard discussion-board forum and moderate the discussion

Although all requirements will contribute to grading, the highest percentage of your final grade will come from the written assignments: *your final grade must reflect your level of writing proficiency at the end of term.* To this end, I will employ a basic portfolio model for assessment as well as grading rubrics.

**Policies, Procedures, and all the other ‘whatnots’**

*Required Work, Course Policies, and Classroom Practices*

For grading purposes, I do not attach percentages to the following requirements and assignments. Preparation and participation are organic elements in my teaching model; therefore, no grade is assigned. However, a lack of preparation and participation always begets lower grades.

**Note:** A frequent student concern involves the timely return of papers and an awareness of grades: “Where I am in this class.” Although the concerns are valid, the process for assigning an accurate grade includes a comprehensive reading, analysis, evaluation, and response to each student text. This process is complex and can be for writing faculty an intellectually, emotionally, and physically taxing responsibility. There is no valid, reasonable, or effective assessment and grading strategies for writing teachers that involve ‘scantron’-based, multiple-choice, or fill-in-the-blank testing practices. Although by midterm, you should know what ‘grade’ or ‘percentage’ you are holding in another class, the same may not be true in this writing class.
Thinking, reading, and writing processes are complex and occur unevenly over an extended period of time. The same is true for assessment and grading. The complexity of these processes is further complicated and compounded by the number of students any one writing faculty might be assigned in a semester. As the number of students increase, the hours needed to read, analyze, evaluate, and assess student texts grows higher and higher—I think any elementary exercise in a math class would substantiate this claim.

To mitigate this situation as much as I can, you may schedule a conference with me to discuss your writing. If I have sufficient writing from you, and I have had adequate time to read and to assess it, I will give you the most accurate and balanced assessment the semester’s constraints will permit.

Students will have, on average, at least one reading assignment for each class. Secondary readings assignments will be posted as needed.

This is a college-level course, and you are expected to come to class prepared by reading any assigned texts and completing any writing assignments. Likewise, by completing the assignments you will be prepared to participate in all class and small-group discussions. If you cannot meet the terms for each class meeting, your attendance will be a distraction to the class and will diminish the quality of the classroom. When this happens, you may be asked to excuse yourself for the day. I admit that this is a shame-based tactic, and I find it a regrettable but necessary caveat.

Attendance
More than two absences from a MW or TTh class will compromise your grade. 5 or more absences from a MW or TTh class will result in a failing grade. Here’s the breakdown.

4th absence: final grade drops one letter grade
5th absence: final grade is an F

Here’s the reasoning behind the attendance policy. Without attending class, you cannot perform your role as a student involved in learning, planning, inventing, drafting; discussing reading and writing; learning and practicing rhetorical moves and concepts; or collaborating with your instructor and classmates.

If you must miss class, you are responsible for obtaining any handouts or assignments for the class: relevant handouts and information should be available on Blackboard within 24 hours after each class. However, there is no guarantee that information will be available consistently, and students should develop contingencies.

Participation includes coming to class prepared and on time, taking part in class discussions, asking questions, contributing your knowledge and insights in whatever form is appropriate, and striving to make all your contributions excellent. It also includes doing the required reading and writing for each class. Note: Please come to class on time. After 15 minutes, please do not come to class. It’s just a noisy bother for all. Habitual lateness will affect your grade because it is an unnecessary interruption and because latecomers are likely to miss valuable information.
There will be small-group work environments.

Turn off **cell phones**. If you have a special-need use for your phone, use a silent mode.

[Please note: Everyone suffers a certain amount of reticence when it comes to speaking to a group. Although this is a writing class, expressing your ideas as well as entertaining other points of view in a discussion forum never fails to create at least some fodder for your writing. Students are expected to take a strong interest in group discussions.]

For all major writing assignments, you will be expected to complete at least one first draft and one final draft.

**Writing workshops** will be held during ‘workshop week’ – dates posted in weekly announcements. Each student will be responsible at least once (but possibly more) for a draft during ‘workshop week.’ A schedule will be determined in advance so that students will have ample time to prepare a draft. Failure to submit a draft for workshop when assigned will be recorded as an absence and count toward the two allowable absences.

**Procedural Basics for Writing Assignments**

1. Use Microsoft Word for all written assignments (except for in-class work).

2. Use the following format for submitting written assignments unless instructed otherwise or unless you’re following specific genre conventions:
   - Your name
   - Course section and number
   - Instructor’s Name
   - Date
   - Double-space the text
   - Use one-inch margins
   - Use 12-point font, Times New Roman
   - Number all pages in the upper right hand corner starting with page 2
   - Use a works cited page as needed – optional except for final research essay

3. Keep copies of all your work, as hard copy and on CD, disk, or memory stick.

4. Save everything in your working folder.

You are invited to make **individual appointments** with me to talk about your ideas, about comments you don’t understand, about problems you’re having with learning in this class. Feel free to email me. I will respond as soon as possible. If you want to discuss any specific grade, please wait 24 hours, giving yourself time to consider my assessment and your response. Please bring all drafts (with or without grades and/or comments) to any conference about papers/grades.

No **late papers** will be accepted for workshop and/or evaluation. Because you will submit assignments electronically, I will make an assignment folder available during the posted period of time for submissions. If the folder is ‘closed,’ please do not ask to submit a hard copy. Plan
to move to the next draft. If you missed a final-draft deadline, you will receive an ‘F’ for that paper.

All writing will be submitted electronically using Blackboard assignment folders. All papers should follow the Modern Language Association (MLA) format (see above). An example of MLA format and links to websites for such formatting will be available in Blackboard.

Please note: this is a writing course and not a computer course; however, you will be expected to work with computers for class assignments, and correspondences will be conducted via email/Blackboard. With the exception of some initial explanations during our first classes, please do not expect extra time in class for any learning curve you might face with technology. Likewise, please do not expect any extensions on due dates for an assignment because of any technical difficulties you have not conquered. Backup all work.

Please read the policy statement on plagiarism in the University Catalogue.  
http://www.umt.edu/studentaffairs/CODE.htm

In brief, plagiarism is any attempt to misrepresent another writer's work as your own. This includes scooping something off the Internet. It is expected that you will adhere to this policy. Plagiarism of any sort will result in a course grade of F, and I will follow the disciplinary procedures as stated in the Student Conduct Code http://www.umt.edu/studentaffairs/CODE.htm

Students may be asked for their research or sources at any time.

WTS 240 is only offered for traditional grades, A-F, and I will employ the 'plus & minus' option. No student taking WTS 240 should expect to receive an incomplete.

Computation of Cumulative Grade Average
I employ a plus/minus grading system. Valid grades and their point values per credit under the traditional grading system will be:
Quality points are assigned as follows: 4 quality points for each credit of A; 3.7 quality points for each credit of A-; 3.3 quality points for each credit of B+; 3 quality points for each credit of B; 2.7 quality points for each credit of B-; 2.3 quality points for each credit of C+; 2 quality points for each credit of C; 1.7 quality points for each credit of C-; 1.3 quality points for each credit of D+; 1 quality point for each credit of D; and 0.7 quality points for each credit of D-.

Please verify grade values at the UM website for your own records:  
http://www2.umt.edu/catalog/acpolpro.htm

Auditors of WTS 240 must meet all requirements established for traditional-grade students.

Reminder: The dates for the last days to drop this class with and without a refund are posted on Cyberbear:  
http://cyberbear.umt.edu/. Likewise, students are responsible for all academic dates and deadlines for the semester.  
http://cyberbear.umt.edu/
Although the standards and rubrics for grading will vary by genre, stated below is a general grading rubric. One staple of consistency will apply: the three elements of the rhetorical situation--message, audience, and writer--represent criteria connected inextricably to any act of writing.

I am willing to provide accommodations for students with special needs and circumstances with the proper verification from the Office for Disability Services.

Final words. I subscribe to the theories and research that characterize writing as a truth-seeking, social, and political act. Because of this approach, writing classes will explore and discuss most subjects and readings from a variety of perspectives and will employ various theoretical and, at times, ethical frameworks. Although this can make for a politically-charged and/or emotional atmosphere, this class will welcome, respect, and make room for ideas and beliefs that are presented with an intelligent, informed, and considerate voice.

* John Ramage, “Writing Arguments”
Grade Descriptors for WTS 240

A to A- Superior paper will demonstrate initiative and rhetorical sophistication that goes beyond general expectations. A text at this level is a well-edited text representing an exceptional understanding of the assignment and a comprehensive understanding of the appropriate rhetorical strategies for the assignment and genre. Paper exhibits an error-free use of writing conventions, including mechanics. The paper demonstrates consistently a highly developed understanding of the connected sense of audience, purpose and development. The writer is able to analyze his or her own writing, reflect on it, and revise accordingly. The paper highlights the writer’s attempt to construct a specific style and to take risks with the work.

B+ to B This paper meets the rhetorical goals in terms of purpose, genre, and writing situation without need for further major revisions of purpose, evidence, audience, or style/conventions, including mechanics. The writer demonstrates some initiative and rhetorical sophistication although it may be inconsistent or uneven. The writer is able to reflect on his or her own writing and make numerous and significant choices about revision. The writer takes risks, although they may not all be successful.

B- to C This paper represents consistent writing that meets the basic requirements, yet the writing would benefit from further revisions of purpose, evidence, audience, or writing style/mechanics (or some combination). Likewise, the text lacks a strong or consistent understanding of rhetorical decision-making involved in the writing situations and genre. The writer composes across strategies, practices, and conventions at varying levels of success with mostly surface revision. The writer has taken some risks in writing and exhibits some style.

Please note: A final semester grade less than a C may not be acceptable by a program or department standards. Please check catalogue and other requirement literature.

C- to D This text does not fully meet the basic evaluative standards. Text is brief and underdeveloped. The text reflects a writer’s composing process that lacks complexity in terms of a rhetorical understanding specific to the genre. The writing calls for extensive revision, specifically to purpose, development, audience, and style and mechanics. The general writing does not present a text that is clear, effective, and convincing.

F Unacceptable writing: text exhibits pervasive problems with purpose, development, audience, and style and mechanics. These issues interfere with the writer’s expression of meaning and a reader’s comprehension of the text. An unacceptable text is often incomplete. A specific text will also earn an F if it does not represent the writer’s original work.