

Course Description

Welcome! English 1900 is designed to introduce and cultivate the rhetorical strategies necessary for producing texts in academic and public settings. This course focuses on writing and composing for specific purposes, audiences, and contexts. That is to say, English 1900 is first and foremost a course in rhetoric. Rhetoric is commonly understood as the art of persuasion. What that means is that rhetoric is the art of crafting messages for particular audiences, in particular contexts, and for particular purposes. What, you may ask, is the difference between a rhetoric course and a standard expository writing course? The difference is this: rhetorical discourse demands that you be sensitive to the *specific* people you're talking to and the *specific* situation you're talking in. Rhetoric tries to get something done, whether it's changing someone's mind or urging a group take a decision.

To that end, this course will ask you to imagine, design, and execute an **advocacy project**. This project, which you will pursue throughout the semester, will focus on a problem or issue of your choosing. Your job throughout the course will be to complete the various stages of this project that will allow you to intervene productively into the problem or issue you've identified. By the end of the course, you will be an expert in the particular situation that concerns you, and you'll be able to craft persuasive messages that will allow you to intervene in that situation. The advocacy project is the key to the course. It is not a standard-issue research paper (which are often written for no audience other than the teacher). It must be designed to appeal to the actual people you want to persuade.

Because English 1900 is a course in public argument, our class will focus around a difficult public issue: religion. Now, this is not a theology course; we won't discuss or study the content of any specific religion.¹ Rather, we're going to look at prevalent arguments *about* religion. (Can religion play a role in democratic deliberation? Should religion be a subject of college education? Is religion a delusion? What is religion, finally?) We'll ask these and other questions throughout the course. Your projects should emanate from this discussion. You might write about a variety of topics having something to do with religion (however you define it), whether it relates to SLU, St. Louis, or your own local community. You can also do a more traditional academic paper on a religious issue, *as long as you can identify the particular audience to whom you're writing*. The point is that you can write about whatever you want **if** you can identify a particular rhetorical situation (purpose, audience, context) and **if** your message has *some* relationship to our course theme.

Student Learning Outcomes

These are things you'll be able to do at the end of this course. Meanwhile, I hope first and foremost that you *enjoy* the work we'll be doing and that you pursue a project that interests and excites you.

1. Write and design persuasive messages that incorporate various kinds of research in order to appeal to specific rhetorical situations (i.e., purposes, audiences, and contexts).
2. Compose rhetorically appropriate prose and design that meets audience expectations of style, usage, and other conventions.
3. Analyze rhetorical situations and messages by using a sophisticated conceptual vocabulary.
4. Incorporate rhetorically appropriate and reliable research sources into new compositions.
5. Summarize, paraphrase, and quote texts accurately and fairly.
6. Evaluate their own compositions and rhetorical choices.

Required Course Texts and Materials

Johndan Johnson-Eilola, *Changing Writing*
Readings in a Google Drive folder

¹ Just so we're clear, I myself will not advocate any particular position. In fact, if I do my job, you won't know my own religious/nonreligious leanings and opinions by the end of the course.

Course Requirements and Grading

Your work will be graded on a 100-point scale. At the end of the course, you will have earned a certain number of points, I will add those points and divide the total by 100 to produce your percentage grade. Here's the breakdown:

Reading Quizzes	10
Short Writing Assignments & Drafts	15
Statement of Purpose	10
<i>Dissoi Logoi</i>	15
Major Proposal	25
Multimedia Project and Process Paper	15
Evaluation Argument	10

For each of these assignments, you will receive a certain number of points. Let's say, for example, you get the following:

- 8/10 for quizzes;
- 12/15 for short writing assignments;
- 9/10 for Statement of Purpose;
- 13/15 for *Dissoi Logoi*;
- 20/25 for Major Proposal;
- 13/15 for Multimedia Project;
- 9/10 for self-evaluation.

That would add up to an 84 for the course. That 84 will be translated into your course grade according to the standard university grading scale:

A	100-94	B-	82-80	D	69-60
A-	93-90	C+	79-77	F	59 and below
B+	89-87	C	76-73		
B	86-83	C-	72-70		

Although many of you will go above and beyond minimum expectations, make sure to at least meet the basic criteria of a successful essay to receive a passing grade. I will spend plenty of time making sure that you understand and know how to incorporate the elements necessary for a successful essay. The work for this course is carefully sequenced and will grow out of ongoing class work as well as your homework assignments. Staying on top of your assignments, doing them diligently, and turning them in on time are all crucial for your success in this class. If you have questions about a grade you received, or if you would like help improving your writing, please speak with me. We can meet during my office hours, which I have posted above, or schedule a different time to meet. Make sure to speak with me *as your concerns arise*, not during the final weeks of class.

Quizzes

Here's how I expect you to do the readings: mark the text, take notes, use a pen or a highlighter, affix sticky notes...in other words, the actual physical text of the reading should look different *after* you read it. If you simply scan the textbook and scroll through the other readings online, you probably are not going to do well on the reading quizzes. Those quizzes will not be multiple choice; rather, they will be writing prompts that will ask you to respond to the text in an original, thoughtful way. So, you've got to do the reading carefully, thoughtfully, and intentionally. (P.S., reading quizzes cannot be made up, even if your absence is excused.)

Short Writing Assignments & Drafts

The Short Writing Assignments and Drafts offer opportunities to invent, explore research sources, and draft for the major project. They are low-stakes assignments: if you make a good-faith effort to complete them according to the specifications, these are easy points to earn. More importantly, they are crucial for developing the ideas and writing that will play into your major research proposal. So while they are low-stakes, take them seriously. I will grade each on a 10-point scale, and then average those scores to produce your total score for this portion of the final grade.

Statement of Purpose

The Statement of Purpose is essentially the proposal for your advocacy project. In this document, you'll describe your purpose (the change you'd like to see; the problem you'd like to address), your audience (who you're trying to reach) and your context (what is the situation in which and toward which you're writing). Basically, your job here is to outline what you'll be writing about for the rest of the semester. It's essentially you giving yourself the main writing assignment of the semester.

Dissoi Logoi

"Dissoi Logoi" is an ancient Greek expression that means "contrasting/competing arguments." Traditionally, from ancient Athens up to the renaissance, students of rhetoric were taught to argue on both sides of given case. That way, they could see a problem from multiple angles and were better able to understand their opponents' positions. That's what this assignment will ask you to do: argue your idea from multiple sides.

Major Proposal

The Major Proposal is the closest thing you'll do to a traditional research paper. However, unlike a traditional research paper, it must be geared toward a real-live problem, a real-live audience, and a real-live context. You can't just write the same old research paper ("Since the dawn of time, human beings have listened to music..."). You've got to gear your writing (and your document design) toward an actual purpose, audience, and context. This will also be the document in which you'll incorporate the library research that you've performed.

Multimedia Project

As part of your advocacy project, you will also express your message (offered in prose in the Major Proposal) in some other medium, whether visual, aural, digital, or some combination of the above. Perhaps this will entail a formal presentation; perhaps a poster or some other visual form, perhaps a podcast, perhaps a video. Your choice depends, as ever, on the purpose, audience, and context you're trying to address. To explain your choices, you'll also write a "Process Paper," which essentially offers and analysis and defense of what you've done in your multimedia project. Unlike the Major Proposal, the process paper requires no outside research. Instead, it focuses on your own work: explaining it and defending it. When I evaluate your multimedia project, I will rely on your process paper to guide me.

Evaluation Argument

In the evaluation argument, the final assignment of the course, you'll argue to me as to why you've succeeded in the course. You'll do this by analyzing your own writing according to the outcomes of the course. You'll submit this before I calculate your final grades, so this is your chance to demonstrate how you've succeeded in the course.

Deadlines

Assignments are due when they are due. For each day that an assignment is late, it receives a 10-point penalty. That means that an assignment that earns an 86 becomes a 76 if it's turned in a day late. Two days late, it becomes a 66, and so on.

Attendance

Regular attendance is expected, and is fundamental to your success in this class. We will be working constantly with *your* writing, so your presence is quite important. Because it is so important for your success in the course, the Writing Program has instituted a program-wide attendance and tardiness policy. You may have **three unexcused absences** over the course of the semester. Starting with your fourth unexcused absence, your final course average will be lowered by 3 points for each new absence. So, if you have five unexcused absences, you lose 6 points from your final average. In that case, if your average were an 84, it would then become a 78.

This may seem draconian, but missing two weeks of the course is a significant problem. Moreover, part of the goal for this course is to acculturate you to university life, which demands a much greater degree of personal responsibility. (And as a wise man once said, 90% of life is showing up.) Be aware that I will *not* check with you when you have reached your three allowed absences—it is your responsibility to keep track. However, I reserve the right to contact your academic advisor(s) if your absences the allowed number. Excused absences (which won't count against your total) include religious holidays, participation in SLU-sponsored activities, civic responsibilities, and weather-related emergencies. If you find that will be absent for an extended period due to illness or a family crisis, you should contact the office of the Dean of Students, who will then contact me. I will do my best to work with you, but an excessive number of absences for any reason will make it difficult for you to complete the course.

Lateness

Do not arrive late to class. If you cannot arrive on time, please consider taking a different section. Three late arrivals (excluding emergencies, about which I am the final judge) will be counted as one unexcused absence against your total.

Conferences

I encourage you to arrange an appointment with me to discuss your essays or any aspects of course work.

Emailing Me

If you have concerns or questions about a homework assignment, you may also email me. However, before you contact me, see the syllabus or class website for possible answers. If neither the syllabus nor the class website answer your questions, contact me. If you email me, please give me 24 hours to respond (48-72 hours on the weekends).

University Writing Services

I also urge you to make use of University Writing Services, where you can receive one-on-one peer writing consultations. A consultant will sit with you, go over your paper, and help you to revise and reformulate. Writing Services is **not** a grammar service; they will not simply proofread your paper. But if you have questions about particular kinds of problems, they will help you identify and correct those problems. You can make an online appointment (<http://www.slu.edu/x34507.xml>) or call at 977.3484.

Academic Integrity

Academic integrity is honest, truthful and responsible conduct in all academic endeavors. The mission of Saint Louis University is “the pursuit of truth for the greater glory of God and for the service of humanity.” Accordingly, all acts of falsehood demean and compromise the corporate endeavors of teaching, research, health care, and community service via which SLU embodies its mission. The University strives to prepare students for lives of personal and professional integrity, and therefore regards all breaches of academic integrity as matters of serious concern. The governing University-level Academic Integrity Policy was adopted in Spring 2015, and can be accessed on the Provost's Office website at: http://www.slu.edu/Documents/provost/academic_affairs/University-wide%20Academic%20Integrity%20Policy%20FINAL.%20%206-26-15.pdf.

Additionally, each SLU College, School, and Center has adopted its own academic integrity policies, available on their respective websites. All SLU students are expected to know and abide by these policies, which detail definitions of violations, processes for reporting violations, sanctions, and appeals. Please direct questions about any facet of academic integrity to your faculty, the chair of the department of your academic program, or the Dean/Director of the College, School or Center in which your program is housed.

Student Success Center

In recognition that people learn in a variety of ways and that learning is influenced by multiple factors (e.g., prior experience, study skills, learning disability), resources to support student success are available on campus. The Student Success Center assists students with academic and career related services, is located in the Busch Student Center (Suite, 331) and the School of Nursing (Suite, 114). Students can visit www.slu.edu/success to learn more about 1) course-level support (e.g., faculty member, departmental resources, etc.) by asking your course instructor; 2) university-level support (e.g., tutoring services, university writing services, disability services, academic coaching, career services, and/or facets of curriculum planning).

Disability Services Academic Accommodations

Students with a documented disability who wish to request academic accommodations **must** contact Disability Services to discuss accommodation requests and eligibility requirements. Once successfully registered, the student also **must** notify the course instructor that they wish to access accommodations in the course. Please contact Disability Services, located within the Student Success Center, at Disability_services@slu.edu or 314.977.3484 to schedule an appointment. Confidentiality will be observed in all inquiries. Once approved, information about the student's eligibility for academic accommodations will be shared with course instructors via email from Disability Services and viewed within Banner via the instructor's course roster. Note: Students who do not have a documented disability but who think they may have one are encouraged to contact to Disability Services.

Title IX Syllabus Statement

Saint Louis University and its faculty are committed to supporting our students and seeking an environment that is free of bias, discrimination, and harassment. If you have encountered any form of sexual misconduct (e.g. sexual assault, sexual harassment, stalking, domestic or dating violence), we encourage you to report this to the University. If you speak with a faculty member about an incident of misconduct, that faculty member must notify SLU's Title IX coordinator, Anna R. Kratky (DuBourg Hall, room 36; akratky@slu.edu; 314-977-3886) and share the basic facts of your experience with her. The Title IX coordinator will then be available to assist you in understanding all of your options and in connecting you with all possible resources on and off campus. If you wish to speak with a confidential source, you may contact the counselors at the University Counseling Center at 314-977-TALK. To view SLU's sexual misconduct policy and for resources, please visit the following web addresses:

<http://www.slu.edu/general-counsel-home/office-of-institutional-equity-and-diversity/sexual-misconduct-policy> or www.slu.edu/here4you.

Schedule of Readings and Assignments

Wk	Tuesday	Thursday
1	8/23: Course Introduction	8/25: <i>Changing</i> , Introduction & Tompkins, "Cloister and the Heart" (Drive)
2	8/30: <i>Changing</i> , Chp. 1 & Lamott, "Sh*tty First Drafts" Short Writing Assignment 1 Due	9/1: <i>Changing</i> , Chp. 2 & Warner, "Tongues Untied" (Drive)
3	9/6: <i>Changing</i> , Chp. 3 & Rorty, "Conversation-Stopper" & Carter, "Culture of Disbelief"	9/8: Oppenheimer, "Cross Fit" & Smith, "Desiring the Kingdom" Short Writing Assignment 2 Due
4	9/13: Berling, "Conversation" Draft of Statements of Purpose Due	9/15: <i>Changing</i> , Chp. 7, 155-173
5	9/20: <i>Changing</i> , Chp. 7, 173-end Library Research Day Final Drafts of Statements of Purpose Due	9/22: <i>Changing</i> , Chp. 6 Miller, "Why Harvard Students..." & Pinker, "Less Faith, More Reason" (Drive)
6	9/27: PEW, "Less Religious," 3-43 Short Writing Assignment 3 Due	9/29: Gopnik, "Bigger than Phil," Hart, "Of Gods"
7	10/4: Voas and Chavez, "Counterexample" Short Writing Assignment 4 Due	10/6: Introduce Dissoi Logoi & Larkin, "Church Going" & Dawkins, "Why There is Almost Certainly"
8	10/11: Robinson, "Darwin" Short Writing Assignment 5 Due	10/13: Dissoi Logoi Project Due
9	10/18: Fall Break (No Classes)	10/20: <i>Changing</i> , Chp. 4
10	10/25: <i>Changing</i> , Chp. 9	10/27: Draft of Major Proposal
11	11/1: <i>Changing</i> , Chp. 5; Workshopping Major Proposal	11/3: Workshopping Major Proposal
12	11/8: <i>Changing</i> , Chp. 10; Proofreading/Design Day	11/9: Proofreading/Design Day Major Proposal Due
13	11/15: Introducing Multimedia Projects	11/17: Workshopping Multimedia Projects
14	11/22: Workshopping Multimedia Projects	11/24: Thanksgiving (No Classes)
15	11/29: Presentation of Projects	12/1: Evaluation Argument Workshop; Multimedia Projects & Process Paper Due
	Exam Week	Evaluation Argument Deadline TBD