

ENG 590: Studies in Technical Communication: Shaping Information, Shaping Knowledge
Spring 2008; Credit 3; CID 3845

Location: The University Center
Time: T 6:00-8:50
Instructor: Dr. Carroll Ferguson Nardone
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Hours: T/Th 12:30-2:00; MWF by appointment

Course Description

This course examines the ways in which writing shapes our ways of knowing. We will examine “what texts **do** and **how** texts mean rather than **what** they mean.” Using documents from a variety of disciplines and from a variety of historic eras, we will study the ways in which knowledge is built from a socio-historical perspective through what might seem to be innocuous texts. Attention will also focus on visual conventions and the ways in which visual structures shape our common knowledge. Students will have the opportunity to choose historical or contemporary, non-literary documents for their own personal study.

Course Objectives

Upon completion of this course students will be able to:

- Apply different modes of analysis to non-literary texts
- Understand how writing shapes and is shaped by specific cultures and contexts
- Analyze knowledge acquisition through writing processes in different disciplines and across genres
- Conduct basic textual research

Required Texts

What Writing Does and How It Does It: An Introduction to Analyzing Texts and Textual Practices. Edited by Charles Bazerman and Paul Prior. Lawrence Earlbaum Associates Publishing. ISBN#0-8058-3806-6.

Scrolling Forward: Making Sense of Documents in the Digital Age. David M. Levy. Arcade Publishing. ISBN# 1-55970-648-1.

Shaping Information: The Rhetoric of Visual Conventions. Charles Kostelnick and Michael Hassett. Southern Illinois UP. ISBN#0-8093-2502-0.

The Emergence of a Tradition: Technical Writing in the English Renaissance, 1475-1640. Elizabeth Tebeaux. Baywood Publishing. ISBN#0-89503-175-2.

The Languages of Edison's Light. Charles Bazerman. MIT Press. ISBN#0-262-52326-4.

Class Policies

Attendance

I do not distinguish between excused and unexcused absences. If you miss class for whatever reason, you do not get the benefit of the day's discussion and activities. I will keep the official record of attendance and students are responsible for making sure their attendance is properly recorded. Attendance in the classroom assumes students will be prepared and will actively participate in the day's activities. Ten points of your final grade comes from your attendance and participation.

Earning attendance points is vital to your progress in this class, so make sure that you attend class regularly and are prepared for the day's activities. Attendance points will be earned according to the following list:

0 absences =	10 points
1 absences =	9 points
2 absences =	8points
3 absences =	7 points
4 absences =	6 points
5 or more =	0 points

You are expected to be in attendance for the entire class session in order to earn credit. If you are unable to attend a class, you must make sure you are prepared for the session when you return. Much of what you need to know to be prepared will be on the calendar, but unanticipated events can occur during classes that may change the calendar. Contact me or a classmate to see what unanticipated assignments, discussions, etc., you might have missed; this will help ensure that you are not surprised when the class is doing something for which you aren't prepared.

Written Assignments

Reading Responses - Students will prepare a one-page, single-spaced (double-spaced between paragraphs) response to each week's readings. These responses are not to include summary, but are an impressionistic reflection on the assigned readings. Students are encouraged to explore the ideas that occur as they read and relay how their new knowledge fits with previous knowledge and beliefs. Students are encouraged to be as comprehensive as possible in discussing the readings, but are not required to reflect on ALL components of that week's assignment. Often, one particular portion of the readings will have a more profound influence and students are encouraged to explore that course in their reflective responses. While these are formal assignments, tone and sentence structure should reflect the exploratory nature of the writing. Each response is worth up to two points; students can earn a maximum of 25 points in this category.

Mid-term and Final Exams - Each exam will be essay structure. Students will be given topics the class meeting before the exam and will be asked to prepare (but not write) their responses outside of class. 15 points each.

Preliminary analysis and presentation – Students will create an independent textual analysis. This assignment is essentially a trial run for the larger semester project. Students are encouraged to explore a topic, begin the analysis, and present their idea to the class in the form of a proposal. The class will give feedback and suggestions, which can then be integrated into the final project. 10 points.

Analytic Report – This project encourages students to apply one method of analysis to any type of non-literary document. Students are encouraged to explore their own interests and to define their project from their own lives or from a particular area they are most interested in studying. Bazerman’s *What Writing Does...* has some ideas at the end of each chapter that could be expanded to fit the requirements of this assignment. Students should consider this as an “emergent design” project – one which they will consider, define, and create throughout the semester as they study the course materials. The intent of this assignment is to produce a formal essay, but within the context of this course, other methods of textual presentation might be considered. Students will work collaboratively, with the instructor and with other students, to define their projects, especially through the preliminary presentation assignment above. 25 points.

Grades

Responses	25
Analysis and presentation	10
Analytic Report	25
Mid-term	15
Final	15
Attendance and participation.....	<u>10</u>
Total	100 points

The grading scale is based on a ten-point system:

- A=90-100;
- B=80-89;
- C=70-79;
- D=60-69;
- F=59 or below

Academic Honesty All students are expected to engage in all academic pursuits in a manner that is above reproach. Students are expected to maintain complete honesty and integrity in the academic experiences both in and out of the classroom. Any student found guilty of dishonesty in any phase of academic work will be subject to disciplinary action. The University and its official representatives may initiate disciplinary proceedings against a student accused of any

form of academic dishonesty including, but not limited to, cheating on an examination or other academic work which is to be submitted, plagiarism, collusion and the abuse of resource materials.

Americans with Disabilities Act

It is the policy of Sam Houston State University that individuals otherwise qualified shall not be excluded, solely by reason of their disability, from participation in any academic program of the university. Further, they shall not be denied the benefits of these programs nor shall they be subjected to discrimination. Students with disabilities that might affect their academic performance are expected to visit with the Office of Services for Students with Disabilities located in the Counseling Center. They should then make arrangements with their individual instructors so that appropriate strategies can be considered and helpful procedures can be developed to ensure that participation and achievement opportunities are not impaired.

SHSU adheres to all applicable federal, state, and local laws, regulations, and guidelines with respect to providing reasonable accommodations for students with disabilities. If a student has a disability that may affect adversely his/her work in this class, then the student is encouraged to register with the SHSU Counseling Center and to talk with the instructor about how best to deal with the situation. All disclosures of disabilities will be kept strictly confidential. NOTE: no accommodation can be made until the student registers with the Counseling Center.

Religious Holidays

Section 51.911(b) of the Texas Education Code requires that an institution of higher education excuse a student from attending classes or other required activities, including examinations, for the observance of a religious holy day, including travel for that purpose. A student whose absence is excused under this subsection may not be penalized for that absence and shall be allowed to take an examination or complete an assignment from which the student is excused within a reasonable time after the absence.

"Religious holy day" means a holy day observed by a religion whose places of worship are exempt from property taxation under Section 11.20, Tax Code.

Course Calendar

Tentative Schedule of Topics and Assignments

Notes:

1. The following schedule may be revised or replaced as the semester progresses. Watch Blackboard for updates.
2. Students are responsible for completing and submitting assignments on time.

Note: **WWD** = *What Writing Does*; **SF** = *Scrolling Forward*; **SI** = *Shaping Information*; **ET** = *Emergence of a Tradition*; **LEL** = *Languages of Edison's Light*

Week #	Dates	Class Preparation Completed <i>before class</i>	Activities
1	Jan 22		Course Overview and Guidelines; Lecture: Locating the field
2	Jan 29	Read: WWD, Chapter 10, "Rhetorical Analysis: Understanding How Texts Persuade Readers" pp. 279- 307 SF, Preface-Chapter 2 (xi- p.38)	Response #1 due
3	Feb 5	Read: SF, Chapter 3-5, pp. 39-100 WWD, Intro - Chapter 1, pp. 1-32	Response #2 due
4	Feb 12	Read: SF, Chapter 6-8, pp. 101-157 WWD, Chapter 2, pp. 33-56	Response #3 due
5	Feb 18	Read: SF, Chapter 9-10, pp. 158-202 WWD, Chapter 3, pp. 57-82	Response #4 due
6	Feb 25	Read:	Response #5 due

		WWD, Chapter 4-6, 83-163	Review for exam; topics given
7	Mar 4	Mid-term exam	
8	Mar 18	Read: SI: Introduction -Chapter 3, pp. 1-118	Response #6 due
9	Mar 25	Read: SI: Chapter 4-Conclusion, pp. 119-228	Response #7 due
10	Apr 1	Read: ET, Preface- Chapter 3, pp. iii-89	Response #8 due electronically; Class research day
11	Apr 8	Read: ET, Chapter 4-5, pp. 91-173	Response #9 due
12	Apr 15	Read: ET, Chapter 5-7, 137-246	Response #10 due Draft analysis and presentation
13	Apr 22	Read: LEL, Introduction-Chapter 5, pp. 1-109	Response #11 due Final paper discussion/workshop
14	Apr 29	Read: LEL, Chapter 6-10, pp. 111-217	Response #12 due Final paper discussion/workshop
15	May 6	Read: LEL, Chapter 11-15, pp. 219-333	Response #13 due; Review for exam; Workshop
Final	May 15	Final Exam	Response#14 due – reflection Final analysis paper due

