

WR 13300: Multimedia Writing & Rhetoric

Section 07: TR 9:30-10:45 am, Coleman Morse Center 330
Section 08: TR 11:00-12:15 pm, Coleman Morse Center 242
Section 09: TR 3:30-4:45 pm, DeBartolo Hall B011

Dr. Whitney Lew James (she/her/hers)
Office Hours: MW 2:00-3:30 pm, Zoom (PMI 948 789 48121)
Email: wjames3@nd.edu (responses M-F 8:00-5:00 pm)

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COURSE OVERVIEW AND EXPECTATIONS

This course is an introduction to rhetoric, writing, and research. As a multimedia-focused course, we will identify, analyze, and compose arguments across a variety of media giving special attention to ethical virtues of argumentation and the form those virtues take across argumentative forms and contexts. To engage in ethical, multimodal argumentation, we will discuss argument as a concept and you will make a series of different types and modes of arguments about a topic of your choosing.

While some might assume that a required writing course will focus on "academic writing," grammar, or spelling, this course is designed to help you develop rhetorical sensitivity and to compose in a variety of situations and media. In my experience, a one semester writing course can't address every type of (academic) writing situation or medium of composing, but it can provide you with methods for analyzing writing situations and responding to those situations by making choices about how to compose in response to the given context. Therefore, much of the text-based writing we will do in this course is writing about your writing choices, or metacognitive writing.

This is an interactive, discussion-based seminar and workshop (not a lecture-based class). Our goal in this course is to analyze and craft ethical arguments, which requires extensive discussion and in-class application exercises. You are encouraged to come to class with questions, points of confusion, disagreement, and observations. Each of our class sessions will involve in-class writing, discussion, workshop activities, and reflection. For each unit, you will engage in drafting, peer workshopping, and revision. We'll also have three individual conferences, which will focus on discussing your ideas and work, over the course of the semester.

I share the University's commitment to social justice and strive to maintain a positive learning environment based on open communication, mutual respect, and non-discrimination. In the spirit of our rhetorical inquiry and ethical argumentation, our University mission, and basic human dignity, we will not discriminate on the basis of race, sex, age, economic class, disability, veteran status, religion, sexual orientation, gender identity, or national origin. Further, I have designed this course to provide all students with the opportunity to excel, not survive. Required writing courses have served gatekeeping functions within higher education. As part of my commitment to social justice, this course is meant to invite students into the academy, rather than test them. If there are circumstances that may affect your performance in this class, please let me know as soon as possible so that we can work together to develop strategies for adapting assignments, in-class activities, and participation expectations to meet both your needs and the requirements of the course. Any suggestions as to how to further a positive, respectful, and open environment will be appreciated and given serious consideration.

In accord with these social justice goals, together, we will try, as best we can, to abide by the following practices of ethical argumentation:

1. Truthfulness. We will make arguments based on what we understand to be the truth of the case, consistent with our experience of it, and we will avoid deception, distortion, and equivocation. ^{[[1]]}_{[[SEP]]}
2. Accountability. We will support our claims with good reasons and the best evidence available to us. ^{[[1]]}_{[[SEP]]}
3. Intellectual Generosity. We will listen carefully, thoughtfully, and respectfully to the other side in arguments. We will endeavor to understand others' views before arguing against them. ^{[[1]]}_{[[SEP]]}
4. Intellectual Humility. We will acknowledge the possibility that in any argument we might be wrong. If we find we are wrong, we will readily acknowledge it. ^{[[1]]}_{[[SEP]]}
5. Intellectual Courage. We will speak clearly and forcefully, when necessary, for ideas or persons that may be unpopular. We will try to find the courage to speak for the outsider before the insider, the just before the unjust, the afflicted before the comfortable, the weak before the strong, the vulnerable before the privileged.
6. Judgment. We will work to develop the wisdom to know which ethical practices of argument apply in which situations, and how to apply these practices in ways that contribute to the common good. ^{[[1]]}_{[[SEP]]}

Learning Outcomes

The University Writing Program is committed to ethical argumentation, and in particular the idea that the practice of argument is an ethical, rhetorical, and practical activity. All UWP courses are designed to develop students' ethical, rhetorical, and practical knowledges.

Ethical Knowledge: After completing a course in the University Writing Program, students should understand the ethical dimensions of argument. This course will develop ethical knowledge by focusing on

- developing the understanding that academic and popular arguments as ethical activities
- composing academic and popular arguments that are informed by the commitment to ethical communication

Rhetorical Knowledge: After completing one of the courses in the University Writing Program, students should understand the rhetorical dimensions of reading and composing arguments. This course will develop ethical knowledge by focusing on

- developing a rhetorical vocabulary for critiquing and composing written arguments
- writing in several genres, including digital genres

- responding to the expectations of diverse audiences

Practical Knowledge: By practical, we mean knowledge of the writing practices that are necessary for college writers. This course will develop ethical knowledge by focusing on

- understanding writing as a process that usually takes multiple drafts to create and complete a successful text
- understanding the collaborative and social aspects of the writing process
- locating, evaluating, organizing, and using research material collected from multiple sources, including scholarly library databases and other sources

Required Texts

- *Becoming Rhetorical: Analyzing and Composing in a Multimodal World* by Jodi Nicotra
- *Fresh Writing*: <https://freshwriting.nd.edu>
- Additional readings will be available through Canvas, this course's learning management system, or generated and shared by your peers.

Digital Spaces

Canvas: Canvas is homebase for this course. Homework, writing assignments, and some readings are posted on Canvas. In-class activities will take place and be archived on Canvas. Writing assignments will be submitted and assessed on Canvas. Many course announcements and reminders will be sent through Canvas. Check your personal notification settings to make sure that you will receive announcements and reminders. You can access canvas through InsideND or by going to canvas.nd.edu.

Zoom: This is not a Zoom-based course, but the past year has shown us that we need to be flexible and meeting digitally is a viable option for connecting. Office hours and individual conferences (more on that later) will all take place over Zoom using the link below.

Individual Conferences: <https://notredame.zoom.us/j/96895298229>

Office Hours: <https://notredame.zoom.us/j/94878948121>

In the event that regular class sessions need to be held virtually or individual students who are in COVID quarantine/isolation need to attend via Zoom (more on this later), use the links below.

Section 07: <https://notredame.zoom.us/j/95431116488>

Section 08: <https://notredame.zoom.us/j/94916540099>

Section 09: <https://notredame.zoom.us/j/98088178166>

Email: In addition to Canvas, I'll send notifications to the class and to individuals via Notre Dame email. When reaching out to me, please use your Notre Dame email.

COURSE STRUCTURE AND ASSESSMENT

This course is designed to begin with an exploration of argument as a concept and practice, move into the analysis and composition of visual and multimodal arguments, and culminate with a reflection and projection on your learning this semester. All major and minor writing assignments are listed below; more detailed information will be provided at the start of each unit.

Unit 1: Exploring Arguments

In the first half of this course, we will explore argument as a concept and you will begin understanding arguments around a specific topic of your choosing. There will be two major assignments for this unit: (1) a Group Argument Presentation on a specific type of argument outlined in *Becoming Rhetorical* and (2) an Inquiry Narrative that draws together a diverse array of perspectives on your research topic and reflects on your research process. The Group Argument Presentation (20 minutes) should include an overview of your assigned type of argument with a digital handout (2 pages), an analysis of an example of this type of argument, and class discussion. All group members will earn the same completion-based

grade. The Inquiry Narrative (7 pages/1,750 words and at least 7 sources) should focus on understanding the ongoing conversation surrounding your research topic and should not develop your own argument (yet). Inquiry Narratives will be assessed using a rubric provided at the start of the unit and will be given a provisional grade at the end of the unit. You will then revise your Inquiry Narrative based on instructor feedback and resubmit in the Metacognitive Portfolio (see below) at the end of the semester, as per program policy.

Unit 2: Creating Visual Interpretations

This unit will challenge you to analyze and compose visual arguments. As a class, we will discuss the way that visualizations, such as infographics, diagrams, charts, maps, etc., make arguments. You will then create a visualization that provides an interpretation/argument about your research topic for an audience that is directly connected with your topic. The content and type of visualization you create will depend on your research topic and specific audience. Your Visual Interpretation will be prefaced by a Maker's Memo (3-5 pages/750-1,250 words) that establishes your chosen audience, topic, and medium; documents your rhetorical choices; and explores the ethical dimensions of your visual argument. The Visual Interpretation and Maker's Memo will be assessed using a rubric provided at the start of the unit.

Unit 3: Making Multimodal Arguments

Following our exploration of visual arguments, we will analyze and compose multimodal arguments. Like visual arguments, multimodal compositions, such as videos, podcasts, songs, websites, physical spaces, etc., make arguments. You will be tasked with creating a video, podcast, or website that develops an original argument about your chosen research topic for an audience that is not directly connected with your topic. Your Multimodal Argument will also be prefaced by a Maker's Memo (3-5 pages/750-1,250 words) that establishes your chosen audience, topic, and medium; documents your rhetorical choices; and explores the ethical dimensions of your multimodal argument. The Multimodal Argument and Maker's Memo will be assessed using a rubric provided at the start of the unit.

Metacognitive Portfolio

As a culmination of this course, you will produce a Metacognitive Portfolio. Like the Maker's Memos, your Metacognitive Portfolio (5 pages/1,250 words, plus previously produced materials) will document your learning and choices over the course of the semester as well as project into your application of this knowledge beyond this course. Metacognition is the awareness and understanding of your own thought and composing process; many scholars believe that metacognition is essential to deep, transferable learning. You will also revisit your Inquiry Narrative and revise it based on peer and instructor feedback as well as your new knowledge about the topic. Your revised Inquiry Narrative will be reassessed and your original grade will be updated to reflect your revisions. The Metacognitive Portfolio will receive a completion-based grade.

Writing Exercises

Throughout the semester you will complete a series (approximately 8) of short (2-3 page/500-750 words), low-stakes writing exercises to help you prepare for and reflect on your major writing assignments. Writing exercises might ask you to document your progress on an assignment, conduct an analysis of an argument, or reflect on what you've learned. Writing exercises will receive a completion-based grade.

Engagement and Participation

The vibrancy of a classroom depends on your active engagement and participation. This class will be more exciting, intellectually diverse, and interesting with your active participation. Engagement and participation means a range of things including: being on time to and prepared for class, completing homework on time, contributing meaningful thoughts to discussion, actively listening to the instructor and your peers, building on the contributions of your peers in class discussions, providing thoughtful and helpful feedback to your peers, asking questions that would benefit the entire class (if you have a question, chances are others do as well), and sharing resources and examples that are relevant to the course. Engagement and participation is harmed by habitual tardiness, distracting others, sleeping

during class, texting or using social media during class, leaving class frequently or for long periods, being unprepared for class activities, talking over others, disengaged body language, or other disruptive behavior. Four times throughout the semester you will assess your own engagement and participation in this course through thorough and honest self-reflection.

Academic Honesty

As a member of the Notre Dame community, I will not participate in or tolerate academic dishonesty. Instances of suspected academic dishonesty such as intentional plagiarism—using someone else’s ideas and/or language as your own or without proper attribution—will be taken seriously and addressed according to the University’s established process for honor code violations. All of the material that you compose for this class should be your own work and properly cited. Each student is responsible for knowing and following the Academic Honor Code.

Grade Distribution

Group Argument Presentation (completion)	10%
Inquiry Narrative (rubric)	15%
Visual Interpretation and Maker’s Memo (rubric)	15%
Multimodal Argument and Maker’s Memo (rubric)	15%
Metacognitive Portfolio (completion)	15%
Writing Exercises (completion)	20%
Engagement and Participation (self-assessed)	10%

A=93-100%
A-=90-92%

B+=87-89%
B=83-86%
B-=80-82%

C+=77-79%
C=73-76%
C-=70-72%

D+=66-69%
D=64-68%
D-=60-63%

F=0-60

COURSE POLICIES Q&A

What is the mask policy for this class?

As your instructor, I am committed to providing a safe and positive learning environment, one in which we all can flourish. With so much uncertainty regarding COVID variants and transmission rates, unless conditions change, I require that everyone wears a mask (disposable, cloth, K95, and N95 masks are acceptable; scarves, neck gaiters, bandanas, or similar items are not suitable) in our classroom. If you are not wearing your mask properly (e.g., it has slipped down under your nose or mouth), I will gently remind you to adjust it. If you forget to bring a mask to class, I will ask you to return to your dorm to get it. Repeated violations will be reported to the Director of the University Writing Program and may result in removal from the course altogether.

What happens if I’m in quarantine/isolation due to COVID?

If you are required to enter quarantine/isolation due to COVID exposure or illness, please contact me as soon as possible to discuss how best to participate in class. Most likely, I will ask you to attend class via Zoom; however, depending on the course plans for the day(s) you will miss, I may provide a recording of the class on Canvas or ask you to complete an activity on Canvas in lieu of attending class.

What should I do if I’m Zooming into class due to COVID quarantine/isolation?

Before signing onto a Zoom session, you are expected to be fully dressed, alert, and in an environment appropriate for class. Plan ahead for where you intend to sign into our Zoom class sessions and survey your surroundings. I encourage you to turn on your video, though I recognize that there may be occasions when you may wish to keep your video muted. If there is a temporary reason that it would be

difficult or awkward for you to have your camera or microphone on (such as illness, privacy or noise issues in the space where you are, etc.), be sure to demonstrate your presence verbally, through the chat, or through other interactive features. My attention will be on the main screen, however, except during a few points when I'll take a look at the chat to see if there are any questions or comments there.

At present, only students who are in COVID quarantine/isolation will Zoom into class and I will only open Zoom if prior arrangements have been made. Notre Dame is committed to providing in-class instruction and is discouraging students and instructors from regularly using Zoom for circumstances beyond COVID quarantine/isolation.

What happens if I don't come to class for reasons other than COVID quarantine/isolation?

Writing is a complex process that requires practice and feedback. Regular attendance is necessary for your success in this course. While regular attendance is required for your success in this course, I understand that this is just one course amongst many others and that you have lives and responsibilities beyond academics. Additionally, the ongoing global pandemic has added stress and uncertainty to all our lives. With that in mind, this course does not have a specific policy about grade reduction due to absences. Instead, you are required to meet with me individually to discuss your progress in the course after five (excused or unexcused) absences.

Should you miss class, I advise that you refer to Canvas to see the day's activities, reach out to your peers to learn about what you missed, and contact me if you have specific questions.

What if I'm just late to class?

I usually begin class with important announcements and reminders. Arriving late means that you will miss these, impacting your participation in that day's in-class activities and potentially your knowledge of the larger arch of the course. Please do your very best to be on time. It is particularly important to be on time for individual conferences as the schedule is tight.

What happens if I don't turn something in on time?

I designed this course so that each low stakes assignment builds to larger assignments and each assignment builds on the previous one. Late work means that you are missing out on crucial steps toward completing the work of this course. Late work also hinders my and your peers' ability to provide timely feedback.

Writing Exercises will not be accepted late. All major assignments will receive a 1% grade reduction for each calendar day that they are late. Note that all assignments must be submitted to Canvas at the beginning of the class period for which they are due.

Retaining these late work policies helps keep everyone accountable for completing the work of this course in a timely manner. However, I understand that things happen and there are many stressors in your lives that may make completing projects on time difficult or impossible. If for any reason you need additional time, please contact me as soon as possible and I will do my best to accommodate you. I would much rather help you excel in this course than make your life difficult and I would much rather read your work late than not at all.

Can I use my computer or cell phone in class?

Yes! You are expected to use your computer and/or cell phone during class periods. As noted above, we'll be using Canvas for many of your in-class activities and some of your classmates may be accessing our course via Zoom due to COVID quarantining/isolation. However, there will be times when I ask you to close your computer and put away your cell phone for the class to engage in conversation. Of course, I expect you to use your computers and/or cell phones for class activities and not extracurriculars.

When will I get my feedback and grades?

Providing thoughtful feedback on your writing is one of my most important jobs as an instructor. All feedback and grades will be posted on Canvas. For most completion-based assignments (Group Argument Presentation and Writing Exercises), I provide summative comments and completion status one week after they are due. For rubric-based assignments (Inquiry Narrative, Visual Interpretation, Multimodal Argument), I will provide in-text comments (when possible), rubric feedback, and a percentage grade within three weeks of their due date. The Metacognitive Portfolio and final grade will be posted to Canvas by Thursday, December 16, at which time you'll be able to review your final grade and contact me if there are any issues. Final grades will be submitted on Monday, December 20 at noon.

After grades for individual assignments are released, please read all of my comments and wait at least 24 hours before contacting me to discuss the grade. After that time period, if you still have questions or concerns, I would be happy to meet with you during regularly scheduled open hours or by appointment.

Is this course just about grammar, punctuation, and spelling?

In short, no. Although grammar, punctuation, and spelling help your audience understand and respond to your message, this course will not focus on these mechanical topics. Instead, we will focus on your composing processes, analyzing different writing situations, writing arguments in a range of media, and addressing multiple audiences. These are "higher order" concerns of writing and rhetoric. Additionally, not all writing situations require everyone to produce Standardized Edited American English (SEAE), for example text messages to friends, social media posts, opinion pieces, poetry, and even many different types of academic writing. There are many opportunities to improve your SEAE, if that is what you are looking for, but this course does not take language enforcement as part of its imperative. I want to focus on your ideas, choices in composing, and methods of addressing your audiences without taking a "red pen" to your stylistic choices.

Can I do extra credit or revise my assignments?

There is no extra credit for this course. As noted above, I believe that all students should be able to excel in required courses. I designed this course with the goal of each student thriving within the parameters of the course. As for revision, the Inquiry Narrative, Visual Interpretation, and Multimodal Argument will all undergo revision before assessment and the Inquiry Narrative will be revised and resubmitted in the Metacognitive Portfolio.

How and when should I contact you, the instructor?

There are multiple ways for you to contact me, both in person and virtually. One way is to actively participate in class and ask questions, which is helpful to all your peers. Schedule permitting, I'm also happy to talk before or after class. You can also always drop in during my virtual office hours. Please feel free to visit office hours to discuss this course or anything else that you feel is important. If office hours do not work for you, then email me to schedule a time that does work. For scheduling an appointment outside of open hours, please give me at least 24 hours advance notice. Outside of in-person contact, email is the best way to get in touch with me. I strive to respond to all emails within 24 hours of receipt. I check my email Monday through Friday from 8:00 am-5:00 pm. If you've emailed me outside of those hours, I'll respond on the next business day.

You should contact me with any questions, concerns, or thoughts you have about this course and beyond. I'm happy to help you as best I can to navigate this course and your new life as a college student. Please note, though, that I am considered a [Responsible Employee](#) who has an obligation to report to the University any information disclosed to me about incidents of sexual violence or any other misconduct by students. To speak with someone confidentially, please contact a counselor at the University Counseling Center on the 3rd Fl of St. Liam Hall, (574) 631-7336.

Where can I get additional help for writing and research?

The more feedback you receive on your work, the better! Notre Dame has an array of resources to help you with the work of this course and others.

The Writing Center at the University of Notre Dame is an excellent resource for all students, all writing projects, and all stages of the writing process. The University Writing Program requires that all students attend at least one session with Writing Center tutors. For information on Writing Center locations (main location is Coleman-Morse 203) and to schedule an appointment, visit <http://writingcenter.nd.edu/>. Appointments fill up quickly during busy periods such as midterms and the final weeks of the semester, so plan ahead and make your appointment as soon as possible.

The Media Corps can provide similar services for multimodal projects. They offer advice about all stages of the multimodal composing process. You can learn more about their services and schedule an individual consultation by visiting <https://remix.nd.edu/media-corps>. This service will come in handy during the second half of the semester and I urge you to take advantage of the Media Corps.

The Hesburgh Libraries has dedicated a librarian who helps first-year students navigate information resources available through the Hesburgh Libraries and develop research strategies that will maximize the use of those resources. For information, see <http://libguides.library.nd.edu/fys>. We will also have two sessions with a Hesburgh librarian during this course.

What can I do if I have a (documented or undocumented) learning disability?

I assume that we all learn in different ways and that the organization of any course will accommodate each student differently. Students with a documented disability should contact Disability Services at <http://sarabeadisabilityservices.nd.edu/> to request formal accommodations. Students without a documented disability—for any reason—can still take advantage of the resources listed above (the Writing Center, Media Corps, and Hesburgh Library).

Are there resources for support beyond academics?

Yes! The University Counseling Center (UCC) provides cost-free and confidential mental health services to help you manage personal challenges that threaten your emotional or academic health. Remember, getting help is a smart and courageous thing to do for yourself and for those who care about you. For more UCC web resources please see: ucc.nd.edu. The UCC is located on the third floor of Saint Liam Hall Phone: 574-631-7336.

As an alternative source of support from the Counseling Center, the Center for Student Support and Care can help you tackle any number of concerns you may be having and negotiate new challenges presented by the university, campus, academia, and more. Find more information at <https://supportandcare.nd.edu/for-students/>.

COURSE SCHEDULE AT A GLANCE*

Unit 1: Exploring Arguments

- Week 1: Introductions and Foundational Concepts
- Week 2: Analyzing Written Arguments
- Week 3: Group Argument Presentations and Research Topic Selection
Group Argument Presentations due 9/7 and 9/9
- Week 4: Individual Conferences and Library Workshop 1
- Week 5: Composing with Sources and Library Workshop 2
- Week 6: Drafting and Workshopping
Inquiry Narrative due 10/5

Unit 2: Creating Visual Interpretations

- Week 7: Analyzing and Creating Visual Arguments
- Week 8: Individual Conferences and Tools for Creating Visual Arguments
- Week 9: Mid-Term Break
- Week 10: Drafting and Workshopping
Visual Interpretations due 11/2

Unit 3: Making Multimodal Arguments

- Week 11: Analyzing and Making Multimodal Arguments

Week 12: Individual Conferences and Tools for Making Multimodal Arguments

Week 13: Drafting and Workshopping

*Multimodal Argument due 11/23-11/30***

Metacognitive Portfolio

Week 14: Introduction to Metacognitive Portfolios

Week 15: Drafting and Workshopping

Final Portfolio due 12/7

**This schedule is meant to offer a general idea for how the course will unfold. Please refer to the class schedule on Canvas for updated day-to-day activities and homework.*

***Because Unit 3 ends near Thanksgiving/Fall Holiday weekend, there is a deadline window. If you would like to complete and submit your Multimodal Argument prior to the holiday weekend, please do so. If you would like to take the extra days and complete Your Multimodal Argument during the holiday weekend, you may do so.*