**Rhetoric 101: Principles of Writing**

**ZJU Summer 2025**

[https://learn.intl.zju.edu.cn](https://learn.intl.zju.edu.cn/)

“The highest compliment from someone who disagrees with you is not, ‘You were right.’

It's, ‘You made me think.’ Good arguments help us recognize complexity where we once saw simplicity.

The ultimate purpose of debate is not to produce consensus. It's to promote critical thinking.”

-Adam Grant

**Who Is My Professor?**

Ryan Flanagan, PhD (“Dr. F”)

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Office hours: by request

## Course Introduction

This introductory class offers basic instruction on skillsets and strategies to craft academic, Western-style arguments. We cover topics such as idea generation, summary, thesis statements, organization, evidence, insight, research methods, catering to different rhetorical situations, meta-reflections, and ultimately, getting our audience to re-think the issue at hand by revealing its complexity.

**Course Structure and Technology**

We will meet in-person with materials and assignments administered through the course management system, [BlackBoard](https://learn.intl.zju.edu.cn/). This is where you will obtain your course materials, like directions and assignment sheets, and submit assignments, from major essays to small discussion posts and quizzes. Check the Homework folder daily to stay on track.

**What Materials Do I Need?**

All readings and materials will be posted to BlackBoard. You will also need Microsoft Word, a paper notebook, and a laptop to compose assignments (Microsoft Word is preferred).

**Course Requirements and Assignments**

One major assignment of at least 6 pages will be due on the day after the final class (40% of your grade). The rest of your grade will be composed of smaller “classwork” or “homework” assignments (50%) and participation / attendance (10%).

## Attendance and Participation Policy

Attendance and participation are essential for this class. You must attend class each day; if you cannot, you must contact me in advance. Any absences will be treated on a case-by-case basis and **may jeopardize your ability to pass the class.** If you miss more than two full class sessions, you cannot pass the class.

**Grading Policy**

All assignments will be graded on a 100-point scale corresponding to letter grades based on:

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Percentage** | **Letter Grade** |
| 98.0-100.0 | A+ |
| 93.0-97.9 | A |
| 90.0-92.9 | A- |
| 87.0-89.9 | B+ |
| 83.0-86.9 | B |
| 80.0-82.9 | B- |
| 77.0-79.9 | C+ |
| 73.0-76.9 | C |
| 70.0-72.9 | C- |
| 67.0-69.9 | D+ |
| 63.0-66.9 | D |
| 60.0-62.9 | D- |
| Below 59.9 | F |

## Academic Integrity and Documentation

Plagiarism is not tolerated and may cause you to fail the class. Plagiarism is misrepresenting another person’s work as your own, whether intentionally or unintentionally, and it is a serious violation of academic integrity. [Read more about plagiarism here](https://owl.purdue.edu/owl/avoiding_plagiarism/index.html). Test your knowledge [HERE](https://uh.edu/honors/human-situation/Student%20Resources/writing-curriculum/Plagiarism.quiz.htm).

Predictive writing technologies (like ChatGPT, Baidu Translate, Grammarly, DeepSeek, Kimi, etc.) can be valuable writing tools in many contexts, when used effectively. However, much of the learning in this course occurs through direct, personal experience of the writing process, from first drafts to final revisions. Over-reliance on such technology and prevents direct experience of the writing process, which is the most valuable part of this class. Furthermore, I am not yet convinced that writing with AI is better at fostering critical thinking skills than writing without AI. **Therefore, I expect that you do not use AI for any purpose in this class**, with the exception of using machine translation for single words. **Do not translate more than one word with machine translation, such as Baidu Translate**. If you do, you are allowing AI to make decisions that you should be making instead.

Your drafts will be checked for AI-generated text using a variety of tools and methods; **using AI for any purpose in this class may result in not getting feedback, failure of an assignment, or failure of the entire class**. This class has a zero-tolerance AI policy, which means even using AI one time will result in severe penalties.

If you are worried about being falsely accused of using AI, I would strongly suggest turning on your “revision history” in Microsoft Word to track the composing and revising process. This is a very easy and effective method to protect yourself against such accusations. You may also wish to take screen recordings of your composing and revising.

**Tips for Success!**

* Please: save all work to two locations (e.g. on a physical drive and Internet location). I have seen many heartbreaks from students who spent days on a project only to have their laptop stolen, etc. I also recommend using an app such as OneDrive Sync that will automatically save copies of your files to a cloud.
* It is important that we communicate throughout the course. See me early and often if you have problems with anything interfering with class. I am always happy when students show up at office hours.
* If you sit quietly and hide in class, I will forget you’re there. Speak up frequently so I know you’re there! Reach out to me and each other to create rapport!
* Log in to BlackBoard frequently to manage your assignments on a daily basis. If you let them pile up, you will be overwhelmed later.
* Take handwritten notes (not on your laptop). Retention grows exponentially once you begin to write down (with pen and paper) what you’re hearing.
* When possible, provide tips and suggestions to your peers in this class. As a learning community, we help each other learn and grow. One way of doing this is by helping to answer your peers’ questions. By engaging with each other, we learn more.

Thank you for reading the syllabus!

I look forward to working with you!

-Dr. F.

## Course Schedule (Summer 2025)

\*This is only a rough schedule and may change

Day 1 (Aug. 21): What is writing? Who made it? (You did)

* Writing as process
* Critical reading, mapping, doubting
* Prewriting, idea generation

Day 2 (Aug. 22): Where is writing? (Everywhere)

* The rhetorical situation (context, audience, purpose)
* Writing as conversation
* Writing as problem solving

Day 3 (Aug. 25): Who is my audience, and what do they want?

* Appealing to academic and non-academic audiences

Day 4 (Aug. 26): Why should that audience care about my argument?

* Appealing to audience with exigency

Day 5 (Aug. 27): Can other writers help me appeal to audience?

* Appealing to audience with summary

Day 6 (Aug. 28): Can I start drafting now?

* Summary continued
* And thesis statements!

Day 7 (Aug. 29): How to orient my reader?

* Thesis statements continued
* Introductions

Day 8 (Sept. 1): Then what? (Revise some more)

* Argument, structure
  + Development and focus of ideas
  + Organization, transitions
* What is a sentence? Paragraph?
  + - Paragraph unity
    - Insight / evidence selection (added)
* Self-review workshop (draft due)
  + - * Revise for argument, structure

Day 9 (Sept. 2): What am I forgetting? Oh yes, revising.

* Arguments, sentences, and paragraphs continued
* Peer review with partner #1 (draft due)

Day 10 (Sept. 3): How do I close my argument?

* Concessions, counterarguments, and doubts
* Conclusions

Break

* Creative-writing style workshop

Day 11 (Sept. 4): Am I finished revising? (no)

* Editing for style and economy
* Style for audience
* Proofing

Break

* Small group conferences

Day 12 (Sept. 5): Final Peer Review and Reflections

* Peer review with partner #2 (draft due)
* Reflecting on me as a writer