

**Pols 200: Reading and Writing Politics
(1 credit, Writing Intensive)**

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Course Description

What's the best way to approach a complex political text? How do you know what's important? What about writing a paper on a political topic? How should you organize and develop your ideas?

This 1 credit, WI class will use hands-on exercises and examples to help you learn to be careful, critical readers and clear and lively writers.

Also, we will develop the needed vocabulary and thinking skills to be able to analyze the practices of reading and writing, that is, to explicitly articulate the specific steps involved. Being able to read and write does not necessarily mean that one can explain to others how it is done. This level of meta-thinking will enhance your ability to explain and apply what they learn to other contexts.

At both levels – learning to read and write better, and learning to analyze reading and writing better - this course is meant to be practical and practice-based.

Learning Objectives

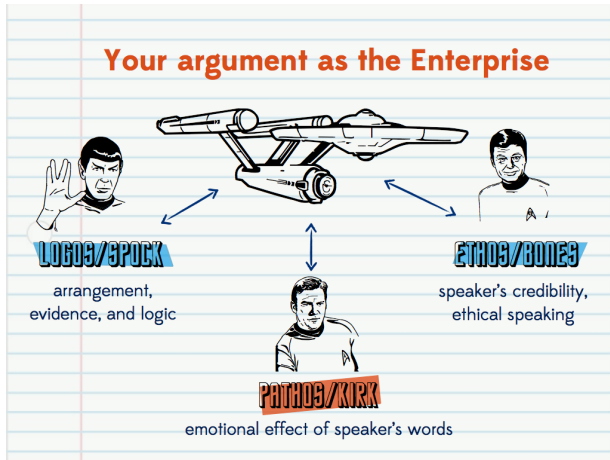
This course takes the department's second SLO as its main focus.

Students will...

1. Identify and analyze arguments presented in diverse texts.
2. Rigorously and respectfully weigh competing views on political questions.
3. Identify and critically reflect on the use of different rhetorical forms of appeal (logos, pathos and ethos).
4. Craft and defend evidence-based arguments of their own, in both writing and speech.
5. Draw appropriately on sources to make effective arguments in writing.

Required texts:

- Torricelli, R., *In Our Own Words: Extraordinary Speeches of the American Century*.
- Turabian, K., *A Manual for Writers of Research Papers, Theses, and Dissertations*, 8th edition
- Handouts as provided in class or on Laulima.



Core assignments (borrowed from the Stanford PWR1 course)

- Short in-class writing (10 points)
- Attendance and participation (10 points)
- **Rhetorical Analysis** (2-3 pages) (20 points)
In this assignment, you use rhetorical principles to analyze how texts make arguments. You learn basic rhetorical concepts, types of appeals and situations, and practice identifying and evaluating the claims, assumptions, evidence, and argumentation implicitly or explicitly utilized in texts.
- **Texts in Conversation** (2-3 pages) (20 points)
This assignment sets the stage for the Critical Review (see below), helping you understand the issues you will deal with in the larger project. You put texts in dialogue with each other, incorporating different perspectives on key issues. This asks you to examine how different writers define and frame these issues, and scrutinize where the writers connect and where they conflict.
- **Research-based argument** (6-8 pages) (40 points total, including 20 points for rough draft)
This assignment asks you to produce a well-supported, focused argument drawing on library and web-based research. You may also undertake primary research. The completed essay should:
 - Demonstrate a clear understanding of the problem it addresses
 - Engage successfully with realistically portrayed opposing views or multiple perspectives
 - Incorporate appropriate material from well-chosen sources purposefully, gracefully and ethically
 - Exhibit reasonable and appropriate rhetorical choices based on the writer's purpose.

Total Writing required

- As a writing intensive course, students must write between 16 – 20 pages. About 10 – 14 will be completed or in-process writing, while about 4 – 6 pages will be short informal writing assignments in class.
- **Rewriting:** papers that were turned in on time may be re-written if you are seeking a better quality paper and/or a better grade. Let me know if you want to rewrite a paper that you have gotten back, and we will establish a due date.
- **Late papers** will be accepted for one week after the due date for **half credit**. It is better to turn in a late paper than to blow off the assignment entirely.
- ****Be sure to deposit your papers in your Laulima drop box as Word documents.****

Classroom etiquette:

- All cell phones must be OFF during class sessions. Do not check email, Facebook, etc. during class. Do not text during class. It is rude. The only function of your computer during our class is to allow you to take notes.
- Please come to class on time and stay for the entire class, unless you have an emergency.

Plagiarism. Plagiarism is taking another person's words or ideas without crediting them. Anything cut and pasted from a website without quotation marks and proper citation is plagiarism. Copying anything from a written source or another person without putting it in quotation marks and citing your source is plagiarism. Paraphrasing so closely that anyone can see the two texts are nearly the same is plagiarism. Plagiarism is cheating. There is no excuse for cheating. You will fail the course at the first instance of plagiarism or cheating of any kind on any assignment. No discussion, no negotiating.

Plagiarism usually occurs when students feel overwhelmed--by school, finances, illness, relationship problems, an assignment they don't understand, etc. If anything like this happens to you, *let me know*. We will work something out that will be more beneficial to you than cheating.

Services to students with disabilities. If you are a student with any kind of disability (physical, mental, learning, etc.) and you have any concerns about access to the course or completing the work, I encourage you to contact the KOKUA program in the Student Services Center at 956-7511.

Grading policy. A = excellent work. B = good but not yet excellent work. C = adequate work. D = pretty bad but I can see you are trying. F = completely inadequate.

Access to computers: You will need to turn in written assignments (unless otherwise specified) electronically as Word documents on our Laulima page. If you have a computer or printer problem, computer labs are available on campus in Sinclair and Hamilton Libraries. Go to <http://www.hawaii.edu/itslab/index.htm> for locations and hours. Additionally, there are Social Science labs in Saunders Hall: check posted hours on lab doors on the third floor. Having your computer or printer malfunction is not an excuse for late work.

SCHEDULE

Week 1 (Aug 22): Introduction

- Question: why is it important to read and write well? How do you think and feel about reading and writing?
- Topic: the importance of curiosity in learning to read and write well.
- Exercise: how do you think about and organize your writing?

Aug 29 – no class (I will be attending the American Political Science Association conference.)

Week 2 (Sept 5): Rhetorical Analysis

- Topics: initial steps in critical reading: pre-read to see where the text is probably going; put the text in historical context.
- Reading:
 - Torricelli, two speeches
- Exercise: organizing “shiny things”

Week 3 (Sept 12): Rhetorical Analysis (con)

- Topics: read the text sympathetically: what is the text trying to accomplish? Identify the basic claims, evidence, and argument. What are logos, pathos and ethos? How do they work?
- Reading:
 - Torricelli, two speeches
 - Turabian, ch 5, “Planning your argument”
 - Exercise: (start in class, complete on your own, and bring to the next class) assemble the elements of one of the speeches in a concept map (form provided)

Week 4 (Sept 19): Rhetorical Analysis (con)

- Topic: read as a writer: reverse-engineer the text to find the implicit organization of the speech. What are figures of speech? What do they do?
- Reading:
 - Torricelli, two speeches
- Exercise: (start in class, complete on your own, and bring to the next class) build on your concept map to create an outline for the speech

Week 5 (Sept 26): Rhetorical Analysis (con)

- Topics: read as a critic: what are the strengths and weaknesses of the speech? What do you have to assume? Where are the silences? What is your reaction to the text?
- Reading:
 - Torricelli, two speeches
 - Turabian, chapter 6, "Planning a First Draft"
- Exercise (start in class and turn in with Rhetorical Analysis paper): plan and write a first draft

1. Written assignment: Rhetorical Analysis paper (including draft) due by **Friday, Sept 28, at midnight** to your Laulima dropbox.

Week 6 (Oct 3): Texts in Conversation

- Topics: selecting topics; identifying salient issues; finding/making research questions
- Reading:
 - Torricelli, work with the speeches already read; add more as needed.
 - Turabian, chap 1, "What Research is and How Researchers Think About It"
- Exercise: organizing your time

Week 7 (Oct 10): Texts in Conversation (con)

- Topics: identifying and engaging relevant sources; taking notes
- Reading:
 - Turabian, ch 3, "Finding Useful Sources"
 - Torricelli, work with the speeches already read; add more as needed.
- Exercise: double column notetaking (in class)

Oct 17: no class. I will be attending the Association for Political Theory conference.

Week 8 (Oct 24): Texts in Conversation (con)

- Topics: giving credit where credit is due; citing sources properly.
- Reading:
 - Torricelli, work with the speeches already read; add more as needed.
 - Turabian, ch 4 "Engaging Sources"
- Exercise – notetaking (con)

Week 9 (Oct 31): Texts in Conversation (con)

- Topics: what is plagiarism? How do we position ourselves as thinkers in relation to those from whom we have learned? How can we avoid plagiarism?
- Reading:
 - Turabian, ch 15, "Introduction to Citations"
 - Torricelli, work with the speeches already read; add more as needed.

2. Written assignment: Texts in Conversation paper due **Friday, Nov 2, by midnight** in Laulima drop box

Week 10 (Nov 7): Writing your Research Paper

- Topics: Bring to class: pick the two speeches your Research Paper will utilize
- In class: free-writing ideas; making a concept map or storyboard; identifying themes; grouping like ideas together; planning your argument; making an outline. Keep these materials and bring to class for subsequent discussions.
- Reading:
 - Turabian, ch 2, “Moving from a Topic to a Question to a Working Hypothesis” (handout)
 - Torricelli, 2 speeches your peers are using

Week 11 (Nov 14): Writing your Research Paper (con)

- Topics: Assembling a rough draft
- In class: continue from week 10
- Reading:
 - Turabian, ch 7 “Drafting Your Report”
 - Torricelli, 2 speeches your peers are using

Week 12 (Nov 21): Writing your Research Paper (con)

- Topics: share rough drafts and the materials that led up to them in class; peer review on process of free-writing ideas, outlining, assembling rough draft, and revisiting your research question.
- Reading:
 - Turabian, ch 13, “Learning from Your Returned Paper”
 - Torricelli, 2 speeches your peers are using

Week 13 (Nov 28): Writing your Research Paper (con)

- Topics: Refining your research question; aligning your introduction and conclusion with the body of your paper
- Reading:
 - Turabian, ch 9, “Revising Your Draft,” and 10, “Writing Your Final Introduction and Conclusion”
 - Torricelli, 2 speeches your peers are using
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3. Written Assignment: Rough draft of **Research Paper** due on **Friday, Nov 30, by midnight** in your Laulima drop box.

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Week 14 (Dec 5): Writing your Research Paper

- Topics: editing, proof-reading
- Reading:
 - Turabian, ch 11, “Revising Sentences”

- Torricelli, 2 speeches your peers are using
- (If needed) Class presentations: present the research question, arguments, supporting evidence, and conclusion within 10 minutes, using no more than 5 slides.

4. Written assignment: Final Research Paper due on **Friday, December 14, by midnight** in your Laulima drop box.