

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, you 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 you can explain to others how it is done. This level of meta-thinking will enhance your ability to explain and apply what you 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.

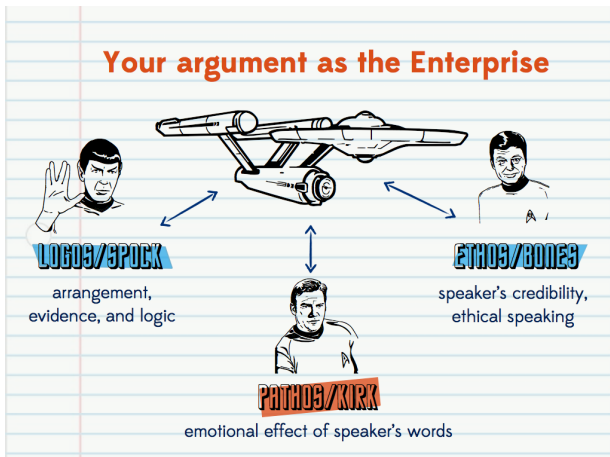
Students will...

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.

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*, 7th edition
- Handouts as provided in class or on Laulima.



Core assignments (borrowed from the Stanford PWR1 course)

- Short in-class writing (about 6-8 pages over the entire semester) (10 points)
- Attendance and participation (10 points)
- Rhetorical Analysis (2-3 pages) (20 points)
 In this assignment, you will use the rhetorical principles we learn in class to analyze how texts make arguments. What are the claims, assumptions, evidence, and argumentation implicitly or explicitly utilized in texts? In other words, how does the text work?
- Texts in Conversation (2-3 pages) (20 points)
 This assignment sets the stage for the Critical Review (see below), by setting up the elements entailed in the larger project. You put texts in dialogue with each other, incorporating different perspectives on key issues. This lets you examine how different writers define and frame these issues, and scrutinize where the writers connect and where they conflict.
- Critical Review (6-8 pages) (40 points)
 Here you are asked to write a well-supported, focused argument drawing on in class-readings as well as library and web-based research. Students 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.

Critical Review: The process of building up to the Critical Review will include some of the following components, which we will select as suits our purposes:

- Annotated bibliography
- Peer review
- Concept map

- Reflection on your writing and other's writing
- Outline
- Research log
- Rough Draft
- Final draft
- Oral presentation

In-Class writing will include some of these assignments:

- Present an argument in Twitter format, using one of the three kinds of appeals (logos, pathos, ethos)
- Use a photo and a caption to compose an argument or a textual analysis (a meme)
- Analyze an image
- Write a blog entry
- Analyze a film
- Free write on a given topic
- Create a concept map
- Make an outline or reverse outline (making an outline of a text that has already been written)

Total Writing required

- As a writing intensive course, students must write between 16 – 20 pages. About 10 – 16 will be completed or in-process writing, while about 6 – 8 pages will be short informal writing assignments in class.
- **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.

This syllabus is an invitation more than an iron-class plan. We may alter it as appropriate during the semester.

SCHEDULE

Week 1: 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
- Reading: select a speech from Torricelli or another source to read for next time.

Week 2: 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 or another source, first speech that we select
 - Select a second speech to read for next time.

Week 3: Rhetorical Analysis (con)

- Topics: read the text sympathetically: what is the text trying to accomplish? Identity the basic claims, evidence, and argument.
- Reading: Torricelli or another source, second speech that we select.
 - Select a third speech to read for next time.

Week 4: Rhetorical Analysis (con)

- Topics: read as a writer: reverse-engineer the text to find the implicit outline.
- Reading: Torricelli or another source, third speech that we select.
 - Select a fourth speech to read for next time.

Week 5: Rhetorical Analysis (con)

- Topics: read as a critic: what are the strengths and weaknesses of the text? What do you have to assume? Where are the silences? What is your reaction to the text?
- Reading: Torricelli or another source, fourth speech

Assignment: Rhetorical Analysis paper due to your Laulima dropbox.

Week 6 : Texts in Conversation

- Topics: selecting topics; identifying salient issues; finding/making research questions
- Reading: Turabian, ch 1 and 2
- Reading: Torricelli or another source, work with the 4 speeches we already read; add more as needed.

Week 7: Texts in Conversation (con)

- Topics: identifying and engaging relevant sources; taking notes
- Reading: Turabian, ch 3
- Torricelli, work with the 4 speeches already read; add more as needed.

Week 8: Texts in Conversation (con)

- Topics: giving credit where credit is due; citing sources properly.
- Reading: Turabian, ch 4
- Torricelli or another source, work with the 4 speeches already read; add more as needed.

Week 9: 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 4 (con), ch 15
- Torricelli, work with the 4 speeches already read; add more as needed.

Assignment:

- Texts in Conversation paper due in Laulima drop box

Week 10: Writing your Critical Review

- Topics: pick the speeches your Critical Review will utilize; free-writing ideas; making a concept map; identifying themes; grouping like ideas together; planning your argument; making an outline. Keep these materials for small-group meetings.

- Reading: Turabian, ch 5 and 6

Week 11: No class: we will substitute the small-group feedback sessions

Week 12: Writing your Critical Review

- Topics: Assembling a rough draft
- Reading: Turabian, ch 7
- Rough draft of Critical Review due in your Lulima drop box.

Week 13: Writing your Critical Review (con)

- Topics: Refining your research question; aligning your introduction and conclusion with the body of your paper
- Reading: Turabian, ch 9 and 10
- Feedback sessions: small group meetings, scheduled during the week, to get feedback from instructor and other students on free-writing ideas, outlining, assembling rough draft, and revisiting your research question.

Week 14: Writing your Critical Review (con)

- Topics: Peer review
- Turabian: ch 12
- Class presentations: present the research question, arguments, supporting evidence, and conclusion within 5 minutes, using no more than 5 slides.

Week 15: Writing your Critical Review (con)

- Topics: editing, proof-reading
- Reading: Turabian, ch 11
- Class presentations: present the research question, arguments, supporting evidence, and conclusion within 5 minutes, using no more than 5 slides.

Week 16: Writing your Critical Review (con)

- Topics: sharing what you've learned about reading and writing political texts; what else you would like to know?

Assignment:

- Final Critical Review paper due in your Lulima drop box.