Instructor Information

Instructor: Luke Alvin  
Office Location: 149 Walker  
E-mail: lalvin@mtu.edu  
Office Hours: MWF 12:00am – 1:00pm or by appointment

Course Identification

Course Number: UN 2001-R06  
Course Name: Composition  
Course Location: 144 Walker  
Class Times: MTWH 9:35AM – 10:50AM

Course Description/Overview

“UN 2001 (also known as ‘Composition: Written, Oral and Visual”) is a sophomore-level writing and communications course. Students learn to apply rhetorical principles to compose effective, supported arguments in written, oral, and visual modes.” (Description from MTU graduate handbook). For this spring, we will be taking the principles of “rhetoric” (a term you will hear plenty about this semester!) and learn how to apply them towards improving your communication skills within your major and also within workplace and business settings.

Course Resources

Course Website

- Canvas: https://mtu.instructure.com/courses/350190. Canvas will be my primary way of providing info to you, so please get into the habit of checking it.
- Everything’s An Argument (5th Addition) by Ruskiewicz and Lunsford
- I will occasionally upload PDFs to our class Canvas website (which I will make you aware of) so please make sure to contact me if you are having any difficulties opening or reading the files.
Grading Scheme

Grading System

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Letter Grade</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
<th>Grade points/credit</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>93% &amp; above</td>
<td>4.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AB</td>
<td>88% – 92%</td>
<td>3.50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td>82% – 86%</td>
<td>3.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BC</td>
<td>76% – 81%</td>
<td>2.50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C</td>
<td>70% – 75%</td>
<td>2.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CD</td>
<td>65% – 69%</td>
<td>1.50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D</td>
<td>60% - 64%</td>
<td>1.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F</td>
<td>59% and below</td>
<td>0.00</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

I’ll always round up to the nearest whole point in the case of fractions.

Grading Policy

Grades will be based on the following:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Assignment</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
<th>Points</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Research Project</td>
<td>(20%)</td>
<td>200</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Visual/Audio Project</td>
<td>(20%)</td>
<td>200</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Presentations</td>
<td>(20%)</td>
<td>200</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Argumentative Paper/Analysis</td>
<td>(20%)</td>
<td>200</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>In-class participation</td>
<td>(20%)</td>
<td>200</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total Points</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td><strong>1000</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Late Assignments

Work is due at the start of class on the day that it is due. For each day that work is turned in late, it will be lowered a letter grade. Work turned in five days or later will receive a zero. If, for some reason, you know that you cannot meet a deadline, please talk to me in advance, and I may be able to work with you. I understand that issues (both in other classes and in your personal lives) can arise, and I am fairly flexible about working with you on due dates. With that being said, you will be expected to complete all your work, even if we do arrange for an extension. Also, you have to talk to me in advance about asking for an extension—don’t just email me the night before something is due. Talk to me at least three days (preferably more) before the due date and I may be able to help you out.

Course Policies
A note on respect in the classroom: In this class we will be sharing our thoughts and opinions on issues that can sometimes become heated and we might have disagreements. Regardless of whether or not you agree with someone, it is expected that you remain polite and respectful. Rude, hostile, and intolerant behavior will not be tolerated and could result in me asking you to leave class, resulting in an unexcused absence.

Attendance policy: 20% of your grade is in-class participation. With that in mind, it is important that you attend class and participate in the discussions. If you know in advance that you are going to be unable to attend class, please let me know ahead of time. Hopefully this does not happen with anyone but if you miss an excessive amount of class (four class periods), your grade will go down a letter grade for each additional day you miss—so please attend class!!!

Cell phones: I don’t care if you bring your phones to class. All I ask is that you put them on vibrate or silence at the start of class and that you are not texting, playing games, or doing anything disruptive with your phone during our class.

Plagiarism/Academic Expectations

According to MTU plagiarism is “knowingly copying another’s work or ideas and calling them one’s own or not giving proper credit or citation.” Likewise, “reusing” a paper from a different course, copying, cheating, etc are all violations of MTU’s academic integrity code. If you violate MTU’s academic integrity code, I will refer you to the appropriate channels.

I’ll let you in on my experience with people who decide to cheat, copy, reuse papers, find a website to write a paper for them, etc—they are really hurting themselves. Maybe they get away with it once or twice, but the risk is huge. If you decide to cheat, you run the very real risk of getting in serious trouble at Michigan Tech. **IT'S NOT WORTH IT!!!!** If you feel overwhelmed and the only way you can get your paper done is to cheat, please talk to me and I will be happy to work and help you on your paper/project outside of class.

University Policies

If you have a disability that could affect your performance in this class or that requires an accommodation under the Americans with Disabilities Act, please see me as soon as possible so that we can make appropriate arrangements. The Affirmative Action Office has asked that you be made aware of the following:

Michigan Technological University complies with all federal and state laws and regulations regarding discrimination, including the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990. If you have a disability and need a reasonable accommodation for equal access to education or services at Michigan Tech, please call the Dean of Students Office at 487-2212. For other concerns about discrimination, you may contact your advisor, Chair/Dean of your academic unit, or the Affirmative Programs Office at 487-3310.

Here is the real deal: if you have a disability or any issue that may have an impact on your class performance—please talk to me before or after class (or during my office hours) and I will be more
than happy to work with you. You don’t have to bring in a doctor’s slip or anything—just be honest with me. I want you to do well not only in this class but in your other classes, so please let me know how I can help you.

Academic Integrity:
http://www.studentaffairs.mtu.edu/dean/judicial/policies/academic_integrity.html

Affirmative Action:
http://www.admin.mtu.edu/aao/

Disability Services:
http://www.admin.mtu.edu/dos/disability.htm


Class Schedule

**Week One—Introducing the Class**

*Monday 25 June:*

*Tuesday 26 June:*
Introduction to argumentation. Watch “Wikileaks documentary” and discuss various forms of argumentation.

*Wednesday 27 June:*
Reexamine the “Collateral Murder” video. Consider the role that audience (both intended and unintended) play in how arguments are created. Briefly introduce the “rhetorical triangle”.

*Thursday 28 June:*
Emotional Arguments: “Pathos”. In what ways are emotional arguments the most powerful sort of arguments? What are the flaws with an emotional appeal? What about examples?

**Week Two—The Fourth of July and Aspects of the Rhetorical Triangle**
Monday 2 July:
Arguments based on character: “Ethos”. Why is the authority of a speaker/writer important? How do such things as citation influence and reflect the importance of character/authority? How can we establish credibility and authority as writers?

Tuesday 3 July:
Arguments based on facts and reason: “Logos”. How do people use facts and reasons to create arguments? How is this helpful? How can this be problematic?

Wednesday 4 July:
Happy Fourth of July! No class!

Thursday 5 July:
No class—Day off for travelling.

Week Three—Evaluating and Analyzing

Monday 9 July:
Recap of rhetorical triangle. Introduction to rhetorical analysis. Why is rhetorical analysis important to understanding how arguments are created? How does this apply to how we write for both academic and non-academic audiences?

Tuesday 10 July:
Watch movie “Persepolis”. How is this movie different from other films we have seen? Who might be the audience of this film? How is it critical of the current government in Iran? What can we learn from this film?

Wednesday 11 July:
Discussion of the movie. Did you like it? Did you dislike it? How did having someone like me show the film influence your thoughts/opinions? How do we evaluate material? Why is this criteria important? Is there anything that is completely “neutral”? What about science? What about books we have read?

Thursday 12 July:
Using statistics in our information. How can stats be manipulated? How are they helpful? Why do we need them?

Week Four—Researching
Monday 16 July:

Beginning the research paper. Let’s explore how we can start brainstorming ideas for our research papers. Mind-mapping, using other creative ways to start exploring how we can start brainstorming ideas for the paper.

Tuesday 17 July:

Finding and using sources. Think back to how we evaluated criteria relating to movies and other data. How does this relate to how we evaluate sources? Where can we go to find information?

Library visit/meeting.

Wednesday 18 July:

Avoiding plagiarism. First off—what is plagiarism? How can we summarize and use sources without plagiarizing? Introduction to documentation and citation.

Thursday 19 July:

Citations. How to document and cite your work. Examples and where to go for help.

Week Five—Visual Communication

Monday 23 July:

Using images (“visual rhetoric”). Why do we use images in our research? What sort of appeal can be made with visuals? How do we actually insert images into our work?

Tuesday 24 July:

Watch and discuss the infamous Nazi propaganda film “The Eternal Jew” (Der ewige Jude). In what ways did the Nazi film industry use visual imagery to influence their audience? Why is it important to study films such as this?

Wednesday 25 July:

Analyzing visual elements of arguments. Building on what we watched in the “Eternal Jew”, let’s look at how specific elements of visual imagery can be used to create an argument.

Thursday 26 July:

Social Networks and their impact on society. What role do visual elements play in the creation of online profiles (think Facebook, online dating sites, etc).
Week Six—Audio Communication

Monday 30 July:
The importance of sound in communication—especially when combined with images. Consider the genre of music videos or sounds in relation to sporting events. In what way are sounds and images complimentary to each other? How does this reflect on how arguments can be created?

Tuesday 31 July:
PowerPoints—what makes a good PowerPoint? What makes a bad PowerPoint? How can we use sounds to compliment the images in a PowerPoint? How can the use of sounds distract from the message in the PowerPoint?

Wednesday 1 August:
Combining sounds with images besides PowerPoints. What can we create to assist with a presentation besides a PowerPoint presentation? Why is it important for both the sounds and images to compliment each other?

Thursday 2 August:
Watch the BBC’s Planet Earth/Wild. How does the BBC combine sounds and images in this publication? Is it an effective use?

Week 7—Course Wrap-Up

Monday 6 August:
Effective public speaking and speakers. Why do people have fears of speaking in public or giving presentations? What can we do to mitigate these fears? Sign up for end of semester presentations!

Tuesday 7 August:
First round of presentations.

Wednesday 8 August:
Second round of presentations. You have to attend, even if you already presented!!

Thursday 9 August:
Last day!! Discussion on what was effective for the semester. What would like to see improved? What did you like? This is your chance to help me become a better teacher!