

ENGL 5301

Topics in Rhetoric and Composition: Rhetoric and Narrative Theory
W 5:30-8:15
Hall 314 Conference Room

Dr. Scott Gage

Student Hours:

- M: 1:00-2:30
- T: 11:00-12:00
- W: 1:00-2:30
- R: 11:00-12:00
- & by appointment

Office Location: Classroom Hall 322

Email: scott.gage@tamusa.edu

Course Description

Study of a specific topic in the art of writing and/or in the teaching of that art. May be repeated when a different topic is scheduled.

Section Description

Our section of ENGL 5301 explores the intersection of rhetoric and narrative. Emphasizing exploration, I've designed our course as an introduction to rhetorical and narrative theory. As an introduction, our course focuses on identifying and defining key rhetorical and narratological terms. We'll do that work together this semester through the collaborative development of a key term glossary, which we'll continually revise both as we read, discuss, and deliberate theory and as you apply and evaluate our key terms through weekly assignments. You'll use those assignments not only to write a key term paper but also to compose a "process portfolio" that demonstrates your work and your learning this semester.

Course Outcomes

Given the scope and focus I describe in the section description, I've designed our course to help you develop an introductory understanding of rhetorical theory, narrative theory, and the important connections between the two. But I've also designed our course in support of your work and development as graduate students. To that specific end, you'll be able to do the following by the end of the semester:

1. Identify key theoretical terms
2. Define key theoretical terms
3. Interpret complex academic texts
4. Apply theoretical frameworks
5. Evaluate theories and key terms
6. Assess individual learning
7. Develop research questions and methods
8. Compose texts for academic audiences
9. Build a portfolio
10. Create knowledge in a specialized area

Course Requirements

To achieve these outcomes, I'd like you to complete the following work this semester:

1. weekly Reading Notes,
2. weekly SRR responses,
3. weekly "mini projects" keyed to our readings,
4. a Key Term paper, and
5. a Portfolio.

In addition, I'd like each of you to lead us in a discussion of our readings. When you're our discussion leader, you'll be expected to

1. select the week's supplemental readings and
2. led our class in a discussion of at least one hour.

Please note that "leading a discussion" can entail exercises and activities designed to deepen our understanding of the week's readings.

I've assigned you all to be our discussion leaders in alphabetical order. Please email me two weeks before it's your turn to be our discussion leader to identify the supplemental texts you'd like to assign.

Here's the discussion leader calendar:

- Week 3: Javette Bernal
- Week 4: Jocelyn Campa
- Week 5: Marissa Cook
- Week 6: Marisa Dehoyos
- Week 7: Beverly Garcia
- Week 8: Ben Longoria
- Week 9: Edward Perez
- Week 10: Jonathan Rodriguez
- Week 11: Chelsea Sanchez Gonzalez

GenAI Policy

I strongly encourage you not to use GenAI programs such as ChatGPT, Claude, and so on to complete work for our class. I have several reasons:

1. GenAI programs often express cultural and linguistic biases,
2. GenAI programs have a detrimental impact on the environment,
3. GenAI programs cannot be relied on to provide valid or accurate information,
4. GenAI programs are trained on copyrighted material without attribution or compensation, and
5. GenAI programs reproduce cliché content and ideas.

My most important reason involves the following: **you are developing professional disciplinary identities**. As an English Studies professional, you need to be able to engage in close readings and critical analysis; generate unique disciplinary knowledge; and compose professional-level disciplinary texts through recursive writing processes. Using GenAI to do this work **for you** undermines your development of these skills, which undermines your professional development.

I acknowledge there is disciplinary work being done on and with GenAI right now. For example, scholars in Rhetoric and Writing Studies are studying the technology, theorizing its meaning for writing and communication, and testing whether and how it's possible to write and teach **with** GenAI in ways that are ethical. To date, disciplinary organizations such as the Modern Language Association (MLA) have taken the position that students should only use GenAI if their use helps them to develop "AI Literacy." While I still urge you not to use GenAI for the reasons listed above, I agree with MLA's position, so I will not prohibit you from using GenAI as long as

1. you notify me that you intend to use GenAI,
2. you provide a rationale for why your use of GenAI is necessary,
3. you identify which aspect of "AI Literacy" you're attempting to develop through your use*, and
4. you reflect with me on your use.

If you use GenAI without meeting those criteria, I'll consider your use an act of academic misconduct.

*For information about AI Literacy, please refer to MLA's "Student Guide to AI Literacy" posted in the **Syllabus, Calendar, and Assignments** module on our Blackboard site.

Visit the WLDCC!

As you write for our class this semester, please remember that you have an important ally on your side: the Writing, Language, and Digital Composing Center (WLDCC). They can support your writing in ways far more meaningful and impactful than any GenAI program ever could.

Here's more information about them:

The WLDCC provides support to graduate and undergraduate students in all three colleges as well as faculty and staff. Writing tutors work with students to develop reading skills, prepare oral presentations, and plan, draft, and revise their written assignments. Our language tutors support students enrolled in Spanish courses and students composing in Spanish for any assignment. Our digital studio tutors support students working on digital projects such as eportfolios, class presentations, or other digital multimedia projects. The WLDCC offers face-to-face, synchronous online, and asynchronous digital appointments. Students can schedule appointments with the WLDCC in JagWire under the Student Services tab. Click on "Writing, Language, and Digital Composing Center" to make your appointment. Students wanting to work in realtime with a tutor can schedule an "Online Appointment." Students wishing to receive asynchronous, written feedback from a tutor can schedule an "eTutoring" appointment. More information about what services we offer, how to make an appointment, and how to access your appointment can be found on our [website](#) . The WLDCC can also be reached by emailing wldcc@tamusa.edu.

Labor-Based Grading

I'll grade your work and performance this semester using labor-based grading. Often times English classes grade students on the quality of their writing; students receive grades based on the strength of things like thesis statements, organization, grammar and style, etc. In short, English classes often grade students on *product*. Labor-based grading takes a different approach and grades students on *process*. Yes, students in labor-based grading classes receive substantial feedback on the quality of their writing, but that feedback does not determine students' grades.

Rather, labor-based grading determines students' grades based both on the amount of work students complete and on the effort students put in to achieve course outcomes. Rest assured, I will address the quality of your writing when I respond to it. I'll also expect you to put in the time and effort it takes to improve the quality of your writing. But I won't grade you on the quality of your writing. Instead, I'll focus on the quality of your labor and will grade you on whether or not your labor is "complete," "partially complete," or "incomplete."

For every assignment you submit that is "complete," you'll earn 1 point toward your overall grade. "Partially complete" assignments earn 0.5 points, and "incomplete" assignments earn 0 points. I'll provide criteria for what makes each assignment "complete," "partially complete," or "incomplete." These criteria are always objective and quantifiable. For example, I'll often ask you to submit work that meets a minimum word count.

Please note that you may revise and resubmit "partially complete" and "incomplete" assignments as many times as is necessary to make them "complete" up to the Wednesday, December 2.

I use this form of grading because it is an equitable grading practice. I also use labor-based grading because it emphasizes work and labor. Becoming a professional member of an academic discipline requires that you learn to do the work that defines the discipline. Since I'm asking you to do disciplinary work in support of your professional identities, and since that work includes much more than just the writing you produce, I'm grading you on all of the work and labor you complete this semester.

Class Attendance

That work and labor includes class attendance. I'm grading you on attendance because much of the disciplinary work I'm going to ask you to do this semester will take place in class. That work is designed to help you develop professional practices and identities, which means the work you do in class is essential to fulfilling the deeper goal of our course.

You'll earn 1 point toward your grade for every week you attend all of our classes. You'll earn 0.5 points for every week you attend only one class. You'll then earn 0 points for every week you miss both of our classes.

You may make up points for missed classes. We can discuss on an individual basis what you can do to make up for lost attendance points.

Also, please note that I can excuse absences at my discretion, but I need you to communicate with me about why you're not attending. **(Please note that you do not need to disclose specific details about your situation when communicating with me about your attendance.)** Also, per university policy, I'll excuse absences for military service, for any religious holy days you may be observing per your individual faith, and for documented participation in university-sponsored events.

Final Grade

Your final grade will be determined by the total number of points you earn through the labor you complete over the course of the semester.

Course Materials

We'll read one book this semester:

1. *The Cambridge Introduction to Narrative Theory*, 3rd edition, by H. Porter Abbott.

We're going to have our first reading from Abbott's book on Week 2, so please get access to the book as soon as you're able.

In addition to Abbott's book, we'll read 1-2 supplemental texts Abbott references in his chapters each week. These readings will help us gain a deeper and more complex disciplinary understanding of rhetoric and narrative theory.

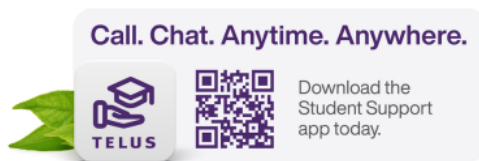
Student Services and Support

As you all well know—or will know soon—being a graduate student is hard: You're taking challenging classes; you're trying to balance that work with other responsibilities you might have like a job (or two or three), like family, etc.; and you're doing all of that while you may be struggling with some real issues involving mental health, food insecurity, academic success, etc. It's not easy. Thankfully, you don't have to handle all of that on your own. The university provides important services that can help you make it as a student. Please check out the list below, and **please** reach out to any that you might need. There's no shame in getting help.

Counseling/Mental Health Resources: As a college student, there may be times when personal stressors interfere with your academic performance and negatively impact your daily functioning. If you are experiencing emotional difficulties or mental health concerns, support is available to you through the Student Counseling Center (SCC). To schedule an appointment, visit our website, call 210-784-1331 or visit Madla 120 between the hours of 8:00 AM and 5:00 PM.

All mental health services provided by the SCC are free and confidential (as the law allows). The Student Counseling Center provides brief individual and group therapy, crisis intervention, consultation, case management, and prevention services. *Crisis support is available 24/7/365 by calling the SCC at 210-784-1331 or through the TELUS student support App.*

The TELUS Student Support App provides a variety of mental health resources to including 24/7/365 support for in the moment distress, crisis support, an anonymous peer-to-peer support network, mental health screenings, podcasts, and articles to improve your mental wellbeing.



Meeting Basic Needs: Any student who has difficulty affording groceries or accessing sufficient food to eat every day or who lacks a safe and stable place to live, and believes this may affect their performance in the course, is urged to submit a [CARE report](#) for support. Furthermore, please notify the professor if you are comfortable in doing so. This will enable them to direct you to available resources. A food pantry is available on campus; click [here](#) for hours and contact information.

Academic Accommodations for Individuals with Disabilities: Texas A&M University-San Antonio is committed to providing all students with reasonable access to learning opportunities and accommodations in accordance with The Americans with Disabilities Act, as amended, and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act. If you experience barriers to your education due to a disability or think you may have a disability, Disability Support Services is located in the Central Academic Building, Suite 210. You can also contact us via phone at (210) 784-1335, visit us at the [website](#) or email us at dss@tamusa.edu. All students are encouraged to discuss their academic accommodation with Disability Support Services and their instructors as soon as possible.

Young Jaguars: This program supports parenting students with daycare if students meet this criteria: (1) must be enrolled in classes at Texas A&M-San Antonio in the current semester, (2) must be Pell eligible or a single parent, (3) child(ren) must be aged 3 to 12-years-old, and (4) child(ren) must be enrolled in Pre-K-3 through 6th grade. Hours of operation is Monday-Thursday 3:30pm-9:00pm. For more information, please contact Young Jaguars at youngjaguars@tamusa.edu or call (210) 784-2636.

Military Affairs: Veterans and active-duty military personnel are welcomed and encouraged to visit the Office of Military Affairs for any question involving federal or state VA Education Benefits. Visit the Patriots' Casa building, room 202, or to contact the Office of Military Affairs with any questions at military.va@tamusa.edu or (210) 784-1397.

Academic Learning Center: All currently enrolled students at Texas A&M University-San Antonio can utilize the Academic Learning Center for subject-area tutoring. The Academic Learning Center provides free course-based tutoring to all currently enrolled students at Texas A&M University-San Antonio. Students wishing to work with a tutor can make appointments through the Brainfuse online tutoring platform. Brainfuse can be accessed in the *Tools* section of Blackboard. You can contact the Academic Learning Center by emailing tutoring@tamusa.edu, calling (210) 784-1307, or visiting the Central Academic Building, room 202. Online tutoring is also available for after hours and weekend assistance.

University Policies

Please review the following for information on the university policies we'll have to follow this semester:

University Email Policy and Course Communications: All correspondence between professors and students must occur via university email accounts. You must have your Jaguar email account ready and working. If it is not working, contact the help desk at helpdesk@tamusa.edu or at 210-784-HELP (4357). If you don't hear back within 48 hours, contact them again. They have many requests during the first part of the semester, so you may need to follow up with them.

Statement of Harassment and Discrimination: Texas A&M University-San Antonio is committed to the fundamental principles of academic freedom, equal opportunity, and human dignity. To fulfill its multiple missions as an institution of higher learning, A&M-San Antonio encourages a climate that values and nurtures collegiality and the uniqueness of the individual on our campus and within our state, nation, and world. All decisions and actions involving students and employees are to be based on applicable law and individual merit. Texas A&M University-San Antonio, in accordance with applicable federal and state law, prohibits discrimination, including harassment, on the basis of race, color, sex, religion, national origin, age, disability, genetic information, veteran status,

sexual orientation, or pregnancy/parenting status. Individuals who believe they have experienced harassment or discrimination prohibited by this statement are encouraged to contact the University's Civil Rights Officer at 210-784-2061 or titleix@tamusa.edu.

Texas A&M University-San Antonio faculty are committed to providing a safe learning environment for all students and for the university as a whole. If you have experienced any form of sex discrimination or harassment, including sexual assault, sexual harassment, domestic or dating violence, or stalking based on sex, know that help and support are available. A&M-San Antonio's Title IX Coordinator can support those impacted by such conduct in navigating campus life, accessing health and counseling services, providing academic and housing accommodations, and more. The university strongly encourages all students to report any such incidents to the Title IX Coordinator. Please be aware that all A&M-San Antonio employees (other than those designated as confidential resources such as counselors and trained victim advocates) are required to report information about such discrimination and harassment to the university. This means that if you tell a faculty member about a situation of sexual harassment, sexual violence, or other related sex-based misconduct, the faculty member must share that information with the university's Title IX Coordinator (titleix@tamusa.edu, 210-784-2061, CAB 439K). If you wish to speak to a confidential employee who does not have this reporting requirement, you can contact the Student Counseling Center at (210) 784-1331 or visit them in Madla 120.

Pregnant/Parenting Students: Texas A&M-San Antonio does not require a pregnant or parenting student, solely because of that status or issues related to that status, to (1) take a leave of absence or withdraw from their degree or certificate program; (2) limit the student's studies; (3) participate in an alternative program; (4) change the student's major, degree, or certificate program; or (5) refrain from joining or cease participating in any course, activity, or program at the University. The university will provide such reasonable accommodations to pregnant students as would be provided to a student with a temporary medical condition that are related to the health and safety of the student and the student's unborn child. These could include maintaining a safe distance from substances, areas, and activities known to be hazardous to pregnant individuals and their unborn child; excused absences because of illness or medical appointments; modified due dates for assignments; rescheduled tests/exams; taking a leave of absence; and being provided access to instructional materials and video recordings of lectures for excused absences, if these would be provided to any other student with an excused absence. Pregnant/parenting students are encouraged to contact the Title IX Coordinator with any questions or concerns related to their status (titleix@tamusa.edu; 210-784-2061; CAB 439K).

Texas A&M-San Antonio has also designated the Title IX Coordinator as the liaison officer for current or incoming students who are the parent or guardian of a child younger than 18 years of age. The Title IX Coordinator can provide students with information regarding support services and other resources.

Financial Aid and Verification of Attendance: According to the following federal regulation, 34 CFR 668.21: U.S. Department of Education (DoE) Title IV regulation, a student can only receive Title IV funds based on Title IV eligibility criteria which include class attendance. If Title IV funds are disbursed to ineligible students (including students who fail to begin attendance), the institution must return these funds to the U.S. DoE within 30 days of becoming aware that the student will not or has not begun attendance. Faculty will provide the Office of Financial Aid with an electronic notification if a student has not attended by the published Census Date (the first week of

class). Any student receiving federal financial aid who does not attend prior to the published Census Date (the first week of class) will have their aid terminated and returned to the DoE. Please note that any student who stops attending at any time during the semester may also need to return a portion of their federal aid.

The Six-Drop Rule: Students are subject to the requirements of Senate Bill (SB) 1231 passed by the Texas Legislature in 2007. SB 1231 limits students to a maximum of six (6) non-punitive course drops (i.e., courses a student chooses to drop) during their undergraduate careers. A non-punitive drop does not affect the student's GPA. However, course drops that exceed the maximum allowed by SB 1231 will be treated as "F" grades and will impact the student's GPA.

Students' Rights and Responsibilities: The following statement of students' rights and responsibilities is intended to reflect the philosophical base upon which University Student Rules are built. This philosophy acknowledges the existence of both rights and responsibilities, which is inherent to an individual not only as a student at Texas A&M University-San Antonio but also as a citizen of this country.

Students' Rights

1. A student shall have the right to participate in a free exchange of ideas, and there shall be no University rule or administrative rule that in any way abridges the rights of freedom of speech, expression, petition and peaceful assembly as set forth in the U.S. Constitution.
2. Each student shall have the right to participate in all areas and activities of the University, free from any form of discrimination, including harassment, on the basis of race, color, national or ethnic origin, religion, sex, disability, age, and pregnancy/parenting or veteran status in accordance with applicable federal and state laws.
3. A student has the right to personal privacy except as otherwise provided by law, and this will be observed by students and University authorities alike.
4. Each student subject to disciplinary action arising from violations of university student rules shall be assured a fundamentally fair process.

Students' Responsibilities

1. A student has the responsibility to respect the rights and property of others, including other students, the faculty, and administration.
2. A student has the responsibility to be fully acquainted with the published University Student Rules found in the Student Handbook, Student Code of Conduct, on our website, and University Catalog, and to comply with them, as well as with federal, state, and local laws.
3. A student has the responsibility to recognize that student actions reflect upon the individuals involved and upon the entire University community.
4. A student has the responsibility to recognize the University's obligation to provide a safe environment for learning.
5. A student has the responsibility to check their university email for any updates or official university notifications.

We expect that students will behave in a manner that is dignified, respectful, and courteous to all people, regardless of sex, ethnic/racial origin, religious background, or disability. Conduct that infringes on the rights of another individual will not be tolerated.

Students are expected to exhibit a high level of honesty and integrity in their pursuit of higher education. Students engaging in an act that violates the standards of academic integrity will find themselves facing academic and/or disciplinary sanctions. Academic misconduct is any act, or attempt, which gives an unfair advantage to the student. Additionally, any behavior specifically prohibited by a faculty member in the course syllabus or class discussion may be considered as academic misconduct. For more information on academic misconduct policies and procedures please review the [Student Code of Conduct](#) or visit the resources available in the [OSRR website](#).

Religious Observances: Texas A&M University-San Antonio recognizes the wide variety of faiths represented among the campus community and protects the rights of students, faculty, and staff to observe religious holidays according to their tradition. Under the policy, students are provided an opportunity to make up any examination, study, or course work requirements that may be missed due to a religious observance provided they notify their instructors before the end of the second week of classes for regular session classes.

Emergency Preparedness: JagE Alert is Texas A&M University-San Antonio's mass notification system. In the event of an emergency, such as inclement weather, students, staff and faculty, who are registered, will have the option to receive a text message, email with instructions and updates. To register or update your information visit: <https://tamusa.bbcportal.com/>. More information on emergency response may be found at: [Emergency Operations Plan](#) and the [Emergency Action Plan](#). Download the SafeZone App (<https://safezoneapp.com/>) for emergencies or call (210) 784-1911. Non-Emergency (210) 784-1900.

Final Note

On a more personal note, I am deeply committed to your professional development as graduate students, so please know that I'm part of the team supporting you and rooting you on this semester. This means you can reach out to me any time you have a question or a concern. It also means you can reach out to me if you ever feel like you're falling behind. Let me know if that's happening as soon as you can, and we can work together to figure out how to get you where you want to be. You can also let me know if you're finding any parts of our class exciting or interesting; you don't just have to reach out if you're having trouble. I want you to succeed as a student, as a writer, and as a person this semester, and I'm going to do what's within my ability to help make that happen.