

ENGL 3312 Introduction to Rhetoric

Fall 2026

Dr. Yvette Chairez / TH 11:00 / CH 221

Course Catalog Description: This course introduces students to concepts, traditions, and debates in rhetorical theory and provides experience in the application of rhetoric in English studies as a discipline.

Course Section Description: Studying “the way we talk about things” helps strengthen our positions in written and oral assignments, hold our own in real world debates and misunderstandings, and open ourselves up to new perspectives and ideas. Being able to discern and critically evaluate a speaker’s rhetorical strategy and purpose prepares us to actively, informedly, and meaningfully participate in the social discourses that make up our everyday personal and professional lives. Each semester, a timely theme is chosen to ground students’ rhetorical study and offer a demonstrative view of how both historical and contemporary rhetorics operate in real time. This semester we will explore the theme “American Culture” – meaning we will use rhetorical tools to examine “the ways we talk about topics” pertaining to the country’s social, political, and pop cultural “norms”.

Graded Work

Debate Arenas x4.....	20%
Final Debate with Written Speech.....	20%
Midterm Presentation.....	15%
Quizzes x4.....	20%
Final Quiz.....	20%
Discourse Community Activities x5.....	10%

English Department Policies

Digital Tools

This course uses Blackboard. While instruction will be provided, it is your responsibility to submit assignments on time. If you experience technical difficulties with Blackboard, please try a different browser, contact me, or contact the ITS Help Desk: (210) 784-4357 or helpdesk@tamusa.edu. Links to Google Docs or SharePoint files will not be accepted, as I am often unable to access the files behind those links due to locked sharing permissions.

Plagiarism

We recognize that what constitutes plagiarism depends upon context. As such, we work with you to learn how different genres, professions, and academic disciplines define plagiarism. In the context of your FYC classes, plagiarism is defined as the intentional use of another’s “language,

ideas, or original (not common-knowledge) material” without acknowledgement (“[Defining and Avoiding Plagiarism](#)”). If you are found to have committed plagiarism as defined here, your instructor may report you for academic dishonesty, and you may be subject to failing the assignment or even failing the class.

Classroom Environment

We are committed to fostering welcoming classroom environments where all students are not only respected and understood but are also recognized as powerful resources for building communities of writers both in the classroom and across campus. While working with classmates and instructors, we ask that you:

- respectfully share your unique experiences and perspectives
- demonstrate respect for and openness to the perspectives and experiences of others
- value the opportunity to learn from difference

Demonstrating respect for those different from you not only prepares you for success in the classroom, but it also prepares you for success as citizens and professionals in a global community.

Because we value the respectful expression and exchange of ideas, students who use violent, harassing, and/or discriminatory language will be reported to the university and may be subject to Student Code of Conduct policies.

Dr. Chairez’s Course Policies

Attendance

Your success and development as a student depend on your active participation within the classroom. Consistent attendance is crucial. You are allowed 3 no-questions-asked absences. Every absence beyond that is 1 point off your final grade, unless you are experiencing extenuating circumstances (mourning, flu, etc.). However, you must communicate the circumstances with your professor to be excused for the resulting absences. When you are feeling able, meet with your professor to create a plan for catching up.

GAI Technology

The use of Artificial Intelligence is prohibited in this course. Do not use it to brainstorm, do not use it to find sources, do not use it to summarize readings, do not use it to proofread, and skip over it when you use Google. All work is run through an AI-detector implanted in Blackboard. Students will have one mandatory chance to re-do assignments that are detected to be more than 50% AI-generated. If AI is still detected after that, you will receive a zero. Any assignment

detected at, for example, 49% AI-generated or lower, you will have the option of re-doing the assignment without AI for a higher grade, or you will receive a 51.

Late Work, Re-works, and Extra Credit

Yes, yes, and yes. I accept, allow, and assign, respectively, all of these. Please schedule a time to talk with me about any of the above should you want to request any of these.

Student-Parents

Children are allowed in our classroom. Please do not ever feel as though you need to miss a class due to a lapse in child care. They may even enjoy some of our group activities! Also, nursing parents are welcome to breastfeed in our classroom.

University Policies and Resources

Academic Freedom

You can access the university's policy on Faculty Academic Freedom [here](#). These protections of Academic Freedom pertain to students, too; meaning, you have “the right to express and explore your opinion on all relevant matters regarding the subject content of the course, within professional norms” during classroom discussions, research projects, and other assignments, as applicable. In all instances, standards of classroom behavior and written decorum are expected and appreciated. My classroom is a space that invites Aristotelian “debate” of the traditional definition: discourse which is spurred in “good faith” and for the purpose of pursuing truth, compromise, and wisdom.

Academic Accommodations for Persons with Disabilities

The Americans with Disabilities Act Amendments Act (ADAAA) of 2008 and the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 are federal anti-discrimination statutes that provide comprehensive civil rights protection for persons with disabilities. Title II of the ADAAA and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act require that students with disabilities be guaranteed equal access to the learning environment through the provision of reasonable and appropriate accommodation of their disability. If you have a diagnosed disability that may require an accommodation, please contact Disability Support Services (DSS) for the coordination of services. The phone number for DSS is (210) 784-1335 and email is dss@tamusa.edu.

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 is an appointment based center where appointments are made through the Navigate platform. Students access Navigate through Jagwire in the Student Services tab. The Center is active on campus outreaching to students to highlight services offered. You can contact the Academic Learning Center by emailing tutoring@tamusa.edu or calling (210)-784-1332. Appointments can also be made through JagWire under the services tab.

Counseling Resources

As a college student, there may be times when personal stressors interfere with your academic performance and/or negatively impact your daily functioning. If you or someone you know is experiencing life stressors, emotional difficulties, or mental health concerns at Texas A&M University – San Antonio, please contact the Student Counseling Center (SCC) located in Modular C, Room 166 (Rear entrance) or call 210-784-1331 between the hours of 8:00AM and 5:00PM. All mental health services provided by the SCC are free, confidential (as the law allows), and are not part of a student's academic or university record. SCC provides brief individual, couples, and group therapy, crisis intervention, consultation, case management, and prevention services. For more information, please visit www.tamusa.edu/studentcounseling

In a crisis situation, please walk-in to the Student Counseling Center (SCC) any time between the hours of 8:00AM and 5:00PM to be seen by a licensed clinician. After hours, please contact UPD at 911 or text "HOME" to 741-741 24/7/365 to connect with a trained crisis counselor. The National Suicide Prevention hotline also offers a 24/7/365 hotline at 1-800-273-8255.

Emergency Preparedness

JagE Alert is Texas A&M University-San Antonio's mass notification. 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 and/or phone call with instructions and updates. To register or update your information visit: <https://tamusa.bbcportal.com/>.

More information about Emergency Preparedness and the Emergency Response Guide can be found here: <https://www.tamusa.edu/upd/index.html>.

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 the first week of class. Any student receiving federal financial aid who does not attend 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.

Jaguar Writing Center

The Jaguar Writing Center provides writing support to graduate and undergraduate students in all three colleges. Writing tutors work with students to develop reading skills, prepare oral presentations, and plan, draft, and revise their written assignments. The Writing Center is currently holding all appointments digitally. Students can schedule appointments with the Writing Center in JagWire under the student services tab. 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 at www.tamusa.edu/Writing-Center. The Writing Center can also be reached by emailing writingcenter@tamusa.edu.

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 contact the Dean of Students (DOS@tamusa.edu) for support. Furthermore, please notify the professor if you are comfortable in doing so. This will enable them to provide any resources they may possess.

Military Affairs

Veterans and active-duty military personnel are welcomed and encouraged to communicate, in advance if possible, and special circumstances (e.g., upcoming deployment, drill requirements, disability accommodations). You are also encouraged to visit the Patriots’ Casa in-person room 202, or to contact the Office of Military Affairs with any questions at military@tamusa.edu or (210)784-1397.

Religious Observances

Texas A&M University-San Antonio recognizes the diversity 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 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.

Students’ Rights and Responsibilities

The purpose of the following statement is to enumerate the essential provisions for the student freedom and responsibility to learn at Texas A&M University-San Antonio. All students are required to follow all policies and regulations as set forth by The Texas A&M University System. This includes the [A&M-San Antonio Student Code of Conduct](#).

Students’ Rights

- A student shall have the right to participate in a free exchange of ideas, and there shall be no university rule or procedure that in any way abridges the rights of freedom of speech, expression, petition and peaceful assembly as set forth in the U.S. Constitution.
- 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, sexual orientation, genetic information or veteran status in accordance with applicable federal and state laws.

- 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.
- Each student subject to disciplinary action arising from violations of university student rules shall be assured a fundamentally fair process.

Students' Responsibilities

- A student has the responsibility to respect the rights and property of others, including other students, the faculty and the administration.
- 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, University Catalog and students must comply with them and the laws of the land.
- A student has the responsibility to recognize that student actions reflect upon the individuals involved and upon the entire university community.
- A student has the responsibility to recognize the University's obligation to provide an environment for learning.
- A student has the responsibility to check their university email for any updates or official university notification.
- 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, sexual orientation

Weekly Schedule

Week 1 Aug 24-28 - What is Rhetoric?

Tuesday: Readings: None / Discuss: Intros; syllabus; What is Rhetoric?; What is Debate? / Lessons: Why study Rhetoric?; the changing nature of debate; Aristotle's mantra for productive debate

Thursday: Readings: None / Discuss: What is Discourse? Why do we persuade? / Lessons: None / Activities: form Discourse Communities; **Debate Arena #1**

Friday: Due: **Take Home Quiz #1**

Week 2 Aug 31-Sep 4 - Rhetorical Beginnings

Tuesday: Readings: pgs 1-8, 65-70, and 73-79 of Aristotle's *Rhetoric*: "Introduction: The Importance of Ancient Rhetoric", "The Nature of Rhetoric", and "The Definition of Rhetoric" / Discuss: Quiz 1; readings / Lessons: TBD

Thursday: Readings: “[Cicero and Quintilian on the Formation of an Orator](#)” by James Golden and “[Diogenes of Sinope](#)” / Discuss: readings / Lessons: TBD

Friday: Due: Take Home Quiz #2

Week 3 Sep 7-11 - Rhetoric and the American Experiment

Tuesday: Readings: “[The First Founding Father: Aristotle](#)” by Gregory Johnson and “[Why Rhetoric Still Matters](#)” by Erec Smith / Discuss: readings; Quiz 2 / Lessons: Rhetoric's democratic roots

Thursday: Readings: “[Beyond the Public Square: Imagining Digital Democracy](#)” by Mary Anne Frank and pgs 197-202 “Public Spheres of the Future” by Annalee Newitz from *Stories Are Weapons* / Discuss: the readings; changing nature of the "public sphere" / Activities: **Debate Arena #2**

Week 4 Sep 14-18 - The Rhetorical Triangle and its Structural Appeals

Tuesday: Readings: None / Lessons: Vibes; introduce the Rhetorical Triangle; overview of Rhetorical Elements; how it is all meant to come together

Thursday: Readings: “[I Am A Female Minority at Harvard, and this is Why I Support PC Culture](#)”; “[Political Correctness is Out of Control](#)”; and “[Political Correctness Isn't as Popular as You Think](#)” / Discuss: the readings' “discourse”; Aristotle's 3 Appeals / Activities: perform close readings of texts using the Rhetorical Triangle; analyze the Structural element(s) of the readings

Friday: Due: Take Home Quiz #3

Week 5 Sep 21-25 - Structure, Metacommunication, and Logic

Tuesday: Readings: pgs xi-xxv and 67-95: “Preface: The Brain Fog of War” and “Advertisements for Disenfranchisement” from *Stories Are Weapons* / Discuss: the readings; Quiz 3; synthesize with previous readings; / Lessons: Language and Culture as Metacommunicative Structural Elements; the readings' “appeal” and logical fallacies

Thursday: Readings: “[The Children's Story](#)” by James Clavell / Activities: **Discourse Community Activity #1:** utilize “[Logical Fallacies](#)” to analyze the discourse taking place in the story

Week 6 Sep 28-Oct 2- More Logic than You Will Ever Want or Need

Tuesday: Readings: excerpts from *Logic*; Aristotle's writings on Logic / Lessons: Whose logic; the Logic table; Logic sentences

Thursday: Readings: pgs 191-195 of *Stories Are Weapons* and "[The Real Life Plan to Use Novels to Predict the Next War](#)" by Philip Oltermann / Discuss: the midterm / Activities: **Debate Arena #3**

Week 7 Oct 5-9 - Linguistics and Pathos

Tuesday: Readings: "[Linguistic Relativism: Language and Thought](#)" (watch the TED Talk embedded in the reading too) / Discuss: the reading / Activities: "Field Trip" down the hall; **Discourse Community Activity #2:** Rhetorics of ____.

Thursday: Readings: Deridot handout; TBD Aristotle on emotion / Discuss: TBD / Activities: **Discourse Community Activity #3** on rhetorical life of a slogan

Week 8 Oct 12-16 - Applied Linguistics and Pathos

Tuesday: Readings: none; watch in class [How Cults Use Language to Control](#) / Discuss: "applied linguistics" and the rhetorical strategies of cult leaders

Thursday: Readings: "[The Dead Internet Theory](#)"; watch in class [How Language Nerds Solve Crimes](#) / Activities: **Discourse Community Activity #4:** Forensic Analysis of AI Content /

Sunday: Due: **Midterm Presentation**

Week 9 Oct 19-23 - Midterm Presentations!

Tuesday: Due: **Presentations** in your Discourse Communities

Thursday: Due: **Presentations** in your Discourse Communities

Week 10 Oct 26-30 - Context and Ethos

Tuesday: Readings: pgs. 172-179 from *Rhetoric*: "Character", "[Robot book club](#)", and "[With the Power of AI, Information Can Pour Straight Through Your Skull and Onto the Ground](#)" / Discuss: Paratext, Subtext, and Intertext; the "discourse" prompting these readings and their emotional appeal; comparative rhetorical analysis of the readings

Thursday: Readings: [Magnifica Humanitas](#): *Encyclical Letter of His Holiness Pope Leo XIV on Safeguarding the Human Person in the Time of Artificial Intelligence* / Activities: **Debate Arena #4**

Week 11 Nov 2-6 - Rhetorical Context and Ethos

Tuesday: Readings: pg. 8-60 of [Anti-Intellectualism in American Life](#) by Richard Hofstad and “[Anti-Intellectualism is on the Rise in America](#)” by Nadia Garriga / Discuss: Rhetorical Context and crossover discourse; ”discourse begets discourse”; ethos appeals

Thursday: Readings: “[Is Anti-Intellectualism Ever Good for Democracy?](#)” by Waters and Dionne Jr. and (OPTIONAL) pgs 14-20: “[The Bourgeois and Proletarians](#)” by Karl Marx / Discuss: context and appeals / Activities: in class work time for Quiz #4

Sunday: Due: **Take Home Quiz #4**

Week 12 Nov 9-13 Rhetoric and Propaganda

Tuesday: Readings: None / Discuss: TBD / Activities: Final Debate Brainstorming Sessions

Thursday: Readings: “[On Bullshit](#)” by Harry Frankfurt / Discuss: Quiz 4; the rhetorical differences among lying, gaslighting, and bullshitting; distinguishing among misinformation, disinformation, and propaganda / Activities: in-class work time for Final Debate Arena

Week 13 Nov 16-20

Tuesday: **Debate Arena #5!**

Thursday: **Debate Arena #5!**

Friday: Due: **Final Debate Written Speech**

Week 14 Nov 23-27 Thanksgiving Break

Tuesday: No Class

Thursday: No Class

Week 15 Nov 30-Dec 4 Purpose, Rhetorical Genres, and American Political Life

Tuesday: Readings: pgs. 155-160 of *Stories Are Weapons*: “Culture Bomb” / Discuss: Contradictory, Complementary, and Competing Rhetorics; go over Final Quiz (#5)

Thursday: Readings: “[Thirst Traps Over Think Tanks: Dems Want Hotter Candidates on the Ballot](#)” by Lauren Egan / Discuss: Alternative Rhetorics / Activities: **Discourse Community Activity #5** using “[Talarico for Texas: Why I'm Running](#)”, “[Bobby Pulido Brings Congressional Campaign to Quinceaneras](#)”, and “[Brendan Herrera for Congress](#)”

Week 16 Dec 7-11 Final Exam Week

Tuesday: Activities: In class work time for Final Project; informal peer review

Thursday: Activities: In class work time for Final Project (optional)

Friday: Due: **Final Take Home Quiz (#5)**