ENGLISH 5383
SPECIAL TOPICS – EXPERTISE, RHETORIC, & TECHNICAL WRITING

3 CREDIT HOURS – FIRST 6 SUMMER WEEKS – MTWU 12:00-1:40

Why do we trust some experts but not others? And how is trust established in writing through rhetoric? This course will teach you to analyze the trust-creating strategies of expert communication as well as introduce you to theory on expertise, credibility, and trust in the public sphere.

ENGL 5383 requires you to discuss course concepts and readings candidly with your professor and other students in an online environment using both synchronous learning methods (via Zoom) and asynchronous methods (such as readings, assignments, and discussion boards).

ENGL 5383 – Expertise, Rhetoric, & Technical Writing (3 credits) in a full semester meets synchronously via livestream once every week for 150 minutes or twice each week in 75-minute segments for 15 weeks, and also meets for a 2-hour final portfolio reflection. Students are expected to complete weekly reading assignments that include case-based writing studies as well as theory in professional writing and rhetoric. Completion and comprehension of the readings is assessed regularly through seminar style discussions, informal presentations, and a series of writing assignments, including critical summaries and discussion board participation. Students compile a final portfolio of revised major assignments and a reflective introduction to the work, totaling 16-18 pages. Formal written work over the course of the semester ranges from 30-35 pages. These activities average at minimum 10-12 hours of work each week to prepare outside of classroom hours.

Summer 2021 this course will meet for the first 6-week session. This means we will meet synchronously online via Zoom from 12-1:40 pm MTWU for the duration of the session, May 17-June 24. Summer courses compress a semester’s worth of content and practice into a short time. Make sure you are prepared to focus on the course for the period it runs.
REQUIRED TEXTS:


Access to SFA library website. Available remotely with MySFA.

STUDENT LEARNING OUTCOMES

- elucidate different types of expertise and explain their relevance to rhetoric and technical communication in a variety of contexts.
- summarize and present scholarly work on expertise and explain its relevance to rhetoric and technical communication.
- create and conduct a SME interview on a technical topic.
- discuss and reflect about applied and scholarly projects.
- discuss trust and ethos, as well as explain their interaction with expertise.
- apply theories of expertise to the public communication of current events.

ACCOMMODATION STATEMENT

Stephen F. Austin provides students reasonable accessibility accommodation to participate in educational programs, activities or services. Students requiring accommodation to participate in class activities or meet course requirements should contact the Office of Disability Services (ODS), Human Services Building, and Room 325, 468-3004 / 468-1004 (TDD) as early as possible in the semester. Once verified, ODS will notify Dr. Parks and outline the accommodation and/or auxiliary aids to be provided.

The full policy is available at: [http://www.sfasu.edu/disabilityservices/](http://www.sfasu.edu/disabilityservices/)

SFASU values students’ mental health and the role it plays in academic and overall student success. SFA provides a variety of resources to support students’ mental health and wellness. Many of these resources are free, and all of them are confidential.

**On-campus Resources:**

SFASU Counseling Services  
[www.sfasu.edu/counselingservices](http://www.sfasu.edu/counselingservices)
3rd Floor Rusk Building
936-468-2401

SFASU Human Services Counseling Clinic
www.sfasu.edu/humanservices/139.asp
Human Services Room 202
936-468-1041

Crisis Resources:
Burke 24-hour crisis line 1(800) 392-8343
Suicide Prevention Lifeline 1(800) 273-TALK (8255)
Crisis Text Line: Text HELLO to 741-741

BRIGHTSPACE BY D2L COURSE WEBSITE

SFA uses Brightspace by D2L as its virtual course management system. You can locate our course website at MySFA.

Class handouts, assignment sheets, and important documents such as this syllabus will be posted on D2L Brightspace in the content tab.

We will use the discussion board, and other Brightspace features.

Assignments will be submitted electronically. Look in the assessments tab for submission folders.

Locate the site’s gradebook. You are in charge of checking the gradebook for errors throughout the semester.

ATTENDANCE AND LATE WORK

English 5383 is a discussion-intensive class. If you miss class meetings you will miss important information, group work, and practice tasks.

Missed in-class assignments generally may not be made up on your own. Therefore, avoid scheduling conflicts.

Except for extraordinary circumstances (email your professor) late work is not accepted. This is because the course is scaffolded: you will often need to have completed earlier assignments before being successful in later assignments.
Please contact your professor in advance or as soon as possible after you have an extraordinary circumstance occur that affects your performance in this class.

There are no extra penalties for missing class beyond the natural consequences of missing instruction and submitting in-class assignments.

**ONLINE MEETINGS**

This course uses Zoom Cloud Meetings for our weekly synchronous class. You can download the Zoom application from zoom.us/meetings. The application is free for your use as a meeting participant.

The Zoom class meeting link will be posted in the Brightspace announcements page and emailed to you.

**GRADES**

Your most important grades are based on your performance in completing the components of every major unit. Your general grade breakdown will be:

- **Rhetorical Expertise Concept Paper** – 15%
- **Exploration of a Credential Paper** – 15%
- **Subject Matter Experts Interview** – 15%
- **Readings, Responses, Presentations** – 20%
- **Ethos, Expertise, and Trust Analysis Paper** – 15%
- **Pedagogy Application** – 10%
- **Final Portfolio** – 10%

Unlike many graduate classes, there is no final paper or project in this class. Instead, there is a final portfolio and reflective introduction to your revised assignments. Therefore, please ensure your participation stays constant throughout the course!

**COURSE SCHEDULE**

**Week 1 – Ethos, Rhetoric, and Expertise Concepts**

- **Monday** in class:
  - Review schedule and Brightspace
  - Introduce course discussion leader assignment.
Goal setting.
Writing and discussion: what you already know about expertise and related concepts. How to apply lay knowledge and your own expertise.
Homework:
Read Aristotle’s Rhetoric – Book 1 Chapter 2
Post initial post for discussion board by midnight.

**The Ancients and Ethos**

**Tuesday** in class:
Introduction to Rhetoric discussion led by Dr. Parks.
Introduction to rhetorical expertise concept paper.
Homework:
Read Collins & Evans Introduction
Get started on rhetorical expertise concept paper.
Discussion leader 1 should prepare discussion summary outline and leading questions.

**Technical Communication Applications**

**Wednesday** in class:
Discussion led by discussion leader 1
Homework:
Read Collins & Evans Chapter 1
Participate in discussion board.
Rhetorical expertise concept paper SFD done.
Discussion leader 1 should complete summative assessment.
Discussion leader 2 and 3 should prepare discussion summary outline and leading questions.

**Thursday** in class:
Discussion led by discussion leader 2 and 3
Workshop partners for papers.
Homework:
Read Collins & Evans Chapter 2
Grundmann “The Problem of Expertise in Knowledge Societies”
Participate in discussion board.
Rhetorical expertise concept paper due Monday.
Discussion leader 2 and 3 should complete summative assessment.
Discussion leader 4 and 5 should prepare discussion summary outline and leading questions.

**Week 2 – The right credentials**

**Monday** in class:
Discussion led by discussion leader 4 and 5
Summative assessment and reflection over the rhetorical expertise concept short paper.
Introduction to exploration of a credential short paper.
Homework:
Read Bakke, “Ethos in E-health” Establishing and Evaluating Digital Ethos and Online Credibility
Participate in discussion board.
Discussion leader 4 and 5 should complete summative assessment.
Discussion leader 6 should prepare discussion summary outline and leading questions.

The uncredentialed and lay expertise

**Tuesday** in class:
Discussion led by discussion leader 6
Homework:
Read Collins & Evans Chapter 3
Participate in discussion board.
Exploration of a credential paper due next class.
Discussion leader 6 should complete summative assessment.
Discussion leader 7 and 8 should prepare discussion summary outline and leading questions.

**SMEs in Technical Communication**

**Wednesday** in class:
Discussion led by discussion leader 7 and 8
Summative assessment and reflection over the exploration of a credential paper.
Introduction to SME Interview.
Homework:
Read Collins & Evans Chapter 4
Read Keppell, Mike. “Optimizing Instructional Designer – Subject Matter Expert

Participate in discussion board.
SME interview choice due Thursday.
1\textsuperscript{st} draft of SME interview questions due Thursday.
Discussion leader 7 and 8 should complete summative assessment.
Discussion leader 9 and 10 should prepare discussion summary outline and leading questions.

**SME strategies**

**Thursday** in class:
Discussion led by discussion leader 9 and 10
Homework:
Read Collins & Evans Chapter 5
Participate in discussion board.
Complete SME interview. (negotiable)
Discussion leader 9 and 10 should complete summative assessment.
Discussion leader 11 should prepare discussion summary outline and leading questions

**Week 3 – Due: SME Interview**

**Monday** in class:
Discussion led by discussion leader 11
Homework:
Submit all SME interview documents with short reflection. (negotiable)
Read Collins & Evans Conclusion
Discussion leader 11 should complete summative assessment.

**Tuesday** in class:
Course midpoint metacognitive reflection
Homework:
Participate in discussion board.
Discussion leader 12 should prepare discussion summary outline and leading questions.

**Collins & Evans Responses**
**Wednesday** in class:
Discussion led by discussion leader 12
Homework:
Participate in discussion board: Find, read, and post one response to Collins &/or Evans “Rethinking Expertise” or their related work.
Discussion leader 12 should complete summative assessment.

**Thursday** in class:
Participate in discussion board: Read one of your peer’s found responses to Collins & Evans. Respond to the response.
Introduction to Ethos, Expertise, and Trust Analysis Paper
Homework:
Read Mackiewicz, Jo. “Assertions of Expertise in Online Product Reviews.” *JBTC*
2010
Participate in discussion board.
Discussion leader 13 should prepare discussion summary outline and leading questions.

**Week 4 – Expertise & Trust in the Public Sphere**

**Monday** in class:
Discussion led by discussion leader 13
Homework:
Read *unintended consequences* from *Diffusion of Innovations*
Participate in discussion board.
Discussion leader 13 should complete summative assessment.
Discussion leader 14 should prepare discussion summary outline and leading questions.
Finalize topic for Ethos, Expertise, and Trust Analysis Paper

**Unintended Consequences**

**Tuesday** in class:
Discussion led by discussion leader 14
Homework:
Participate in discussion board.
Discussion leader 14 should complete summative assessment.
Discussion leader 15 should prepare discussion summary outline and leading questions.
Manufactured Controversies

**Wednesday** in class:
Discussion led by discussion leader 15
Introduction to pedagogy application

Homework:
Finish Analysis Paper SFD for workshop tomorrow.
Discussion leader 15 should complete summative assessment.

**Thursday** in class:
Ethos, Expertise, and Trust Analysis paper workshop.
Invention for Pedagogy Application project.

Homework:
Finish and submit Ethos, Expertise, and Trust Analysis paper workshop.
Finalize choice of a concept for pedagogy application.
Available via the SFA Library
Participate in discussion board
Discussion leader 16 should prepare discussion summary outline and leading questions.

**Week 5 – Pedagogy Project**

**Monday** in class:
Analysis paper summative assessment and reflection.
Discussion led by discussion leader 16.

Homework:
Write content learning objectives and make assessment decisions.
Discussion leader 16 should complete summative assessment.
Find a pedagogy reading from your target discipline. Send the link or title to Dr. Parks for approval.

**Tuesday** in class:
Find and share readings, videos, and other content-delivery artifacts.

Homework:
Prepare and record a supplementary mini-lecture (5-15 minutes) using PowerPoint or similar tool.
Read the pedagogy reading from your target discipline.
Participate in discussion board.
**Wednesday** in class:
Write an assignment guide and rubric.
Homework:
Get at least to the point of SFD for all pedagogy project deliverables.

**Thursday** in class:
Guided peer review of pedagogy project.
Homework:
Finish and submit pedagogy project.

**Week 6 – Final Portfolio**

**Monday** in class:
Summative assessment and reflection over pedagogy project.
Read: Guberman, Daniel. “Student Perceptions of an Online Ungraded Course.”
Available via SFA Library
Reading about summative assessment/portfolio pedagogy
Participate in discussion board.

**Tuesday** in class:
Guided Final Portfolio prep work: Create contents page. Gather all documents.
Decide how goals and assessments will be presented. Create your own style guide.
Homework:
Put together final portfolio. Revise papers using your own summative assessments as a guide.

**Wednesday** in class:
Full guided peer workshop of final portfolio.
Homework:
Continue revising papers if necessary. Finalize portfolio.

**Thursday** in class:
Last peer double-check.
Portfolio due by end of class time.

**ACADEMIC HONESTY**

Work for any course should be newly generated by you for each assignment.

Plagiarism involves using another’s work, words, or ideas without correctly giving credit to the author. It is just as serious to plagiarize the work of another student as it is to plagiarize the work of a published author.
Use a standard documentation style to credit your source. If you have questions about correct documentation, please ask!

**General Policy**

Academic integrity is a responsibility of all university faculty and students. Faculty members promote academic integrity in multiple ways including instruction on the components of academic honesty, as well as abiding by university policy on penalties for cheating and plagiarism.

**Definition of Academic Dishonesty**

Academic dishonesty includes both cheating and plagiarism. Cheating includes but is not limited to (1) using or attempting to use unauthorized materials to aid in achieving a better grade on a component of a class; (2) the falsification or invention of any information, including citations, on an assigned exercise; and/or (3) helping or attempting to help another in an act of cheating or plagiarism. Plagiarism is presenting the words or ideas of another person as if they were your own. Examples of plagiarism are (1) submitting an assignment as if it were one’s own work when, in fact, it is at least partly the work of another; (2) submitting a work that has been purchased or otherwise obtained from an Internet source or another source; and (3) incorporating the words or ideas of an author into one’s paper without giving the author due credit.

Please read the complete policy at [http://www.sfasu.edu/policies/academic_integrity.asp](http://www.sfasu.edu/policies/academic_integrity.asp)

**WITHHELD GRADES**

Ordinarily, at the discretion of the instructor of record and with the approval of the academic chair/director, a grade of WH will be assigned only if the student cannot complete the course work because of unavoidable circumstances. Students must complete the work within one calendar year from the end of the semester in which they receive a WH, or the grade automatically becomes an F. If students register for the same course in future terms the WH will automatically become an F and will be counted as a repeated course for the purpose of computing the grade point average.