

Professor Bill Wolff
College Composition II, Spring 2007, CRN 23239

Syllabus

Course Hours and Location: M: Bozarth Hall 31, 12:15 – 1:30
W: Bozarth Hall 14, 12:15 – 1:30

Office Location: Education Hall 3075 **Office Hours:** MW 9:00 – 10:30

Contact: wolffw@rowan.edu **Office Phone:** 856-256-5221

Course Web Site: <http://users.rowan.edu/~wolffw/courses/cc2/cc2-spring-07/index.html>
certain features of WebCT will also be used

Course Description

The course catalog description reads: “College Composition II emphasizes critical thinking, reading, and writing as they relate to research and argumentation. Evaluation of information as well as exercises in critical thinking and research design build upon skills achieved in College Composition I. A major activity involves writing and documenting a research paper.” To achieve these goals the course will have a central theme: The Rhetoric of War.

We will analyze the rhetoric of war by looking at how people employ language to make arguments about why they fight, what they gain by it, and how they interpret past conflicts. By using a variety of sources—historical texts, government documents, news reports, web sites—we will look critically at not only depictions of atrocities, but at how war is presented, reported, interpreted, and dramatized. Our discussions will lead us to ask important questions about the rhetoric of war: Is declaring war ever justified? What exactly is ethnic cleansing? Who sets the line between a war crime and a “legitimate” act of war? How do the media and the Internet manipulate the way the general public perceives war? Is the United States really as altruistic as it imagines?

Although the course will involve a substantial reading component, our primary focus will be on your writing. You will write two short papers (4 – 6, 5 – 7 pages) and one extended research paper (11 - 15 pages). I'll expect you to hand in rough and final drafts of each short paper, and 3 rough drafts and a final draft of the research paper. You will also complete research process essays and peer responses. It's important for us to understand that we each have our own interpretation of current events, most likely because of our convictions about previous wars and their subsequent victories, defeats, and atrocities, and atrocious victories and defeats. Ultimately, this course will challenge us to rethink how we came to believe what we do, and how the rhetoric of what we see on TV and in the news shapes—and often distorts—our perceptions of war.

Unit I: Justifying War

This unit will introduce us to war theory and the rhetoric governments use when attempting to justify declarations of war. Our readings from Barbara Tuchman's *The Guns of August* will focus on the seemingly inevitable start of World War I, and you will write an essay analyzing the language employed and actions taken by one of the four countries who first declared war in 1914—England, France, Germany, or Belgium—in order to justify declaring war.

Unit II: War and the Internet

This unit will build on Unit I by looking critically at a variety of representations of war, primarily those in which civilians are killed. We will consider the relative objectivity of representations in the media and on the Internet of actions taken during the early phase of war against terrorism fought in Afghanistan by looking at biases hidden within the arguments being made. The sources of some of our readings will be web pages, and in our readings of those pages we will discuss their rhetoric, politics, and reliability.

Unit III: The Research Paper

The research paper will involve a substantial, researched response to a topic in keeping with the subject matter of the course, but of your own choosing. The paper will be completed over the course of the semester, with topic proposals due toward the end of Unit I and refined toward the end of Unit II. Three drafts of increased length will be due during the second half of the semester, and must be completed in order to receive a passing grade in the course.

Required Texts

Hacker, Diana. *Research and Documentation in the Electronic Age*. 4e. Bedford Books, 2006.
Tuchman, Barbara. *The Guns of August*. New York: Ballantine Books, 1994.
Essays by Coates, Miller, Reagan, and others available from WebCT
Online Afghanistan Packet

Required Materials

Computer with Internet access
Microsoft Word (papers written using any other application will not be accepted)
Rowan University email account
Other materials as needed

Course Strands

Rhetoric: Students will develop their ability to look critically at the way text and images are represented in various media, and will gain the tools necessarily to discuss what they observe in rhetorical terms.

Research: Students will develop their ability to conduct research in both the library and on the Internet. They will learn the importance of in-depth research that uses a variety of sources.

Critical Thinking, Writing, and Reading: Students will develop their ability to analyze events in the media and in the texts they read. Students will learn to write academic expository texts in which they use sources—both scholarly and primary—to support and further their own ideas on a subject.

Technology: Students develop their ability to read web pages rhetorically, which allows students to consider not only what gets said, but also how it gets said. They will also learn how to use various tools, which can help them develop their abilities in the other course objectives

Collaboration: Students will develop the ability to work collaboratively in activities that range from online discussion postings to peer reviews to in-class discussion.

Attendance

Much of your time in class will be spent in activities, not in lectures. Therefore, it is more than usually important that you come to class faithfully and that you participate in the activities planned. If genuine disaster should befall you and you must miss a class, please check with other students and the course web site to find out what you have missed.

After SIX absences *for any reason* you will fail the course. After TWO absences your final grade will drop one full grade for every absence. For example, if a student has 3 absences, they will receive no higher than a B in the course; 4 absences no higher than C; 5 absences no higher than a D. A student is considered late if they arrive after the sign-up sheet has gone around the room; lateness equals .5 absences. Missing a required conference counts as an absence.

Office Hours

Office hours are designed for you, giving you a more private environment in which we may talk about your work, your performance in class, etc. If you are unable to see me during my office hours, do not hesitate to make an appointment to see me at a different time. We will have two required conferences—the first during Week 10, the second during Week 14.

Students with Disabilities

Your academic success is important. If you have a documented disability that may have an impact upon your work in this class, please contact me. Students must provide documentation of their disability to the Academic Success Center in order to receive official University services and accommodations. The Academic Success Center can be reached at 856.256.4234. The Center is located on the 3rd Floor of Savitz Hall. The staff is available to answer questions regarding accommodations or assist you in your pursuit of accommodations. We look forward to working with you to meet your learning goals.

Grading

Grades in this course are determined on the basis of a *Learning Record*, which accompanies a portfolio of work presented both at the midterm and at end of term. These portfolios present a selection of your work, both formal and informal, plus ongoing observations about your learning, plus an analysis of your work development across five dimensions of learning: confidence and independence, knowledge and understanding, skills and strategies, use of prior and emerging experience, and reflectiveness. This development centers on the major strands of work in the course: rhetoric; research; critical thinking, reading, and writing; technology; and collaboration.

For every missing non-online posting assignment, your grade will be lowered by one full letter grade. For every 2 missing online postings your grade will be lowered by one full letter grade. For every 3 late assignments, your final grade will be lowered by one full letter grade. It is better to complete an assignment late than to not complete it at all.

Grading Criteria

- A, A-** Represents outstanding participation in all course activities; all assigned work completed, with very high quality in all work produced for the course. Evidence of significant development across the five dimensions of learning. The Learning Record at this level demonstrates activity that goes significantly beyond the required course work in one or more course strands.
- B+, B, B-** Represents excellent participation in all course activities; all assigned work completed, with consistently high quality in course work. Evidence of marked development across the five dimensions of learning.
- C+, C, C-** Represents good participation in all course activities; all assigned work completed, with generally good quality overall in course work. Evidence of some development across the five dimensions of learning.
- D+, D, D-** Represents uneven participation in course activities; some gaps in assigned work completed, with inconsistent quality in course work. Evidence of development across the five dimensions of learning is partial or unclear.
- F** Represents minimal participation in course activities; serious gaps in assigned work completed, or very low quality in course work. Evidence of development is not available.
- IN** Work for the course is incomplete and the instructor will allow the student additional time to complete it. The amount of time allowed is at the discretion of the instructor.