



## Application for Writing Program of Excellence Award

First-Year Composition Program  
University of Oklahoma  
Norman, OK

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Further information can be found at [The University of Oklahoma First-Year Composition Program Website](#); see also our video introduction to our collaborative Canvas teaching resource site [here](#).

### ABSTRACT

Now at the end of a two-year effort to rebuild and upgrade infrastructure, staffing, and curricula, the University of Oklahoma's First-Year Composition Program (OU FYC) has succeeded in creating a curriculum that enjoys the widespread support of instructors, students, and the upper administration and which **imaginatively addresses the needs and opportunities of our students, instructors, institution, and our locale**. The goal of our required two-course sequence is not just to equip OU's undergraduate students to succeed in other courses, but also to capacitate them as citizens to deliberate productively on issues of local and national importance. We want students to emerge from our courses with *civic empathy*, regardless of their initial/ongoing political affiliations, as well as

the ability to analyze public debates and intervene in our broken national discourse. We do so by asking students to:

- Focus on values that motivate meaningful action
- Study the ways in which groups and stakeholders are motivated by values and beliefs
- Understand and practice rhetorical listening (an element of deliberation)
- Study public issues with a local face
- Study rhetorical concepts such as stasis theory that help illuminate controversies
- Study and practice arguing to specific stakeholders
- Make a meaningful personal connection with their research and writing
- Engage in formal and informal public speaking

These strategic learning outcomes effectively unite and provide coherence between the two courses. Our approach aims to **integrate theory and practice, using the best practices in the field**, and our **ongoing assessment** shows that we have been effective in this work. We also offer year-long **professional development for faculty of all ranks, including adjunct faculty**. Our IRB-approved research on the program has resulted in a master's thesis, several articles-in-progress, and an ongoing book project. Presentations of our work at conferences and universities have resulted in **several programs at other institutions** adopting OU's approach to rhetorical education, including Mount St. Mary's and San Jose State University. Texas Christian and University of North Texas have also been studying the curriculum for adoption.

## **PROGRAM DEMOGRAPHICS AND CONTEXT**

OU FYC is a semi-autonomous unit within the College of Arts and Sciences, reporting directly to the Dean of the College. The director, Roxanne Mountford, is also a full professor in the Department of English. A departure from past organizational structures, this distinctive feature has allowed for greater autonomy, and greater collaboration between OU FYC and the College. Like other units in the College, OU FYC has a separate budget overseen by a newly hired office manager, who is a full-time staff member, which allows the program to make strategic investments that benefit both the instructors and students (e.g., see section on community outreach below). The leadership team includes a newly hired Associate Director, Dr. Amanda Klinger (a renewable-term lecturer), and three assistant directors (graduate students in English)—Matthew Jacobson (senior assistant), Courtney Jacobs, and Jason Opheim. They oversee the work of 17 new full-time, renewable term lecturers who teach 4/4 and provide service to the Program; 31 graduate teaching assistants (GTAs), most of whom are in English; and a diminishing number of contingent faculty (on average, 6 per semester).

**OU FYC treats contingent faculty respectfully, humanely, and professionally** by a) moving them into the rank of lecturer when their achievement has been consistently high, b) providing benefits to those who teach at least 3 classes, c) providing them (along with all instructors) a desk of their own in a beautiful space, and d) providing them with **ongoing professional development opportunities**. The Program and the College have also partnered to reduce English GTA workloads. Currently, MA students have a 1/1 load in the first year and a 1/2 or 2/1 load in the second year. New PhD students without teaching experience teach 1/1 in the first year and 2/2 thereafter. Further reductions will occur when we have 20 total lecturers (we hope beginning in Fall 2018). **The instructional staff are a diverse group** racially and ethnically at all levels, with Native Americans comprising the second largest demographic, as well as socio-economically, with many instructors who were first-generation college students. **Political and disciplinary diversity** is also

important to our office because we believe that instruction is more effective when we draw in diverse voices. We give workshops for instructors on how to welcome diversity into their classrooms by modeling rhetorical listening and intervene when student evaluations reveal that instructors are pushing a single agenda, consciously or unconsciously. During our 8-day Orientation for new instructors, we invite representatives from the Center for Social Justice to offer workshops on “Unlearning Racism” and “Unlearning Sexism,” and staff from the Center for English as a Second Language (CESL) to offer a presentation on working with international students. In addition, our department staffs several sections of ENGL 1113 reserved entirely for international students and CESL remains an important resource for both FYC instructors and students enrolled in those sections. Many of our instructors and almost all of the OU FYC leadership have also completed faculty LGBTQ Ally training with OU’s Gender and Equality Center and inclusivity training through OU’s Center for Teaching and Learning.

**OU FYC’s courses are capped firmly at 19 students per section, which is a source of pride for the university,** and together, our instructors teach 4,900 students per year, most of whom are taking ENGL 1113 (Principles of Composition I) and ENGL 1213 (Principles of Composition II), which are general education requirements. Students place into 1113 based on scores on the verbal and writing sections of the ACT or SAT; they may place directly into 1213 with an adequate score on the AP exam in composition (approximately 1/3 of all students do so). Yet, few students have previously practiced the types of writing and thinking that we feature in our curriculum: rhetorical strategies for civic deliberation and argumentation. Because of this, our office will no longer be accepting College Level Examination Program (CLEP) exam scores for 1113 equivalency because so few students exhibit adequate skills for moving directly into 1213. We are confident that all OU students will benefit in numerous ways from taking both ENGL 1113 and 1213. As such, **our placement procedures have been adequate for our student demographic.**

Another distinctive feature of OU FYC is a flat administrative structure that encourages collaboration and distributes expertise. One example is our **outstanding new professional development program**, which is run entirely by a committee of lecturers. Based on suggestions sent to the committee, we offer weekly workshops on teaching. Twice a year, the Program brings in outside speakers who speak to our curricular goals. Our GTAs and contingent faculty take 2 workshops per semester; our lecturers take 1 workshop per semester, though in practice they take many more. Most workshops are offered by the leadership team and the lecturers. In addition, new instructors of all levels take an 8-day Orientation in August before the semester begins that requires, among other things, that they write each assignment that we give to our first-year students and deliver one of the speeches. The Program assesses the Orientation each year to improve, and we are gratified with the strong reviews our new instructors give us (a strong departure from past years).

The flat administrative structure was instrumental in the development of the new curriculum. We don’t just teach rhetorical listening and effective deliberation—we model it in policymaking and curricular development. In Spring 2016, Dr. Mountford worked with three graduate assistant directors to write a curriculum that would be meaningful to OU students and respond to long-standing complaints with older curricula. The co-author of “The Mount Oread Manifesto on Rhetorical Education,” Mountford gave her team the goal of building a curriculum that could enable new college students to become responsible public citizens, capable of recognizing problems in public discourse and practicing effective rhetoric for the public good. Each member brought in an invaluable perspective, balancing one another so that the curriculum would be accessible and thought-provoking to students and instructors. As the group drafted the prompts (see Appendix A),

they were deliberate in avoiding discipline-specific language that might alienate or confuse non-expert instructors while situating theory and knowledge of the field as the foundation of the curriculum and the major assignments. They also created the custom textbook together, with the input and collaboration of Macmillan (see Appendix C). The new curriculum would not be as successful as it is without their initial deliberation and the input of the instructors who helped the next team refine it. Employing a full-collaboration model, OU FYC developed a dynamic and unique curriculum that both moves rhetorical education forward while focusing on the needs of students and instructors alike.

## PROGRAM THEORY AND PEDAGOGY

Responding to “The Mt. Oread Manifesto,” OU FYC’s program-wide curriculum intervenes in students’ understanding of the relationship between their beliefs and values and their stance on public issues. Understanding the first-year composition classroom as a site of rhetorical education offers a means by which we can, in Wayne Booth’s words, “think together” with our students, honoring their needs, desires, and interests, while teaching them how to use language productively in public discourse. This pedagogical approach encourages students to draw on their interests in a way that can help them practice *civic empathy*, which requires taking into account how the world affects them and how their civic actions affect others. Such an approach is critically important in an age in which public discourse is so tragically broken.

In addition to the Manifesto, the program draws on Krista Ratcliffe’s work on rhetorical listening. In working to respond to our prompts, students study the cultural logics and values behind others’ positions, including positions they may not initially agree with. The curriculum remains focused on students’ own interests and values, as it moves them to consider differing values in relation to their own. When they begin to take part in public arguments in the second semester, they take for granted that they are engaged with others whose views may grow out of the same set of values (for example, environmentalists identify “life” as a core value, just as anti-abortion proponents do). We teach students how to analyze public debates using stasis theory and other classical rhetorical concepts (tempered by considerations of power), and to productively enter those debates. Students may emerge as liberal or conservative as they entered our classrooms, but the curriculum does not allow them to dismiss the thoughtful views of others with whom they seek to deliberate. In concert with the authors of the Manifesto, we want our students to “feel motivated and competent enough in their communication skills to advance an idea in the public sphere and engage in meaningful deliberation about ideas” (3).

**English 1113.** Using values as a focus of the course sequence, the first course in the curriculum makes students’ and their subjects’ cultural logics a topic of study so they may begin to analyze the values that are present in and motivate *all* communication. English 1113 calls for deep analysis of personal values, group values, and the values of others with whom students may not agree. The course begins by asking students to look inward before moving them into the public realm. First, students use values as a specific lens to engage their own lived experiences, thereby seeking out and analyzing their own terministic screens. By asking students to investigate the origin of their values, the project recognizes personal experiences and beliefs as supporting evidence for personal value claims. This move sets students within a mode of strategic contemplation, connecting personal beliefs (that come from homes, churches, loved ones, relationships, etc.) to larger social systems that are socially shared but often left uninvestigated. Students are able to write about a topic they are familiar with (themselves), as they simultaneously defamiliarize that topic, looking below the surface to map out the origins of the values they hold. This subtly exposes the ways material realities act on

the way students see and experience the world, and the way they write about it. It also begins to break down the barrier between public and private, demonstrating that the most personal of experiences impact students' public selves.

In the next assignment, students move from the personal to the public (and the social), investigating the way a group puts a shared value into action in a social space. As students' perspectives turn outward, they may make connections between private and public lives in direct ways. By moving students from a values analysis based on personal, lived experience to an analysis that explores how values lead to action in a public setting, the sequence blurs the public/private divide, demonstrating the codependent nature of home lives and public lives. By having students conduct an in-depth analysis of their own values, and then investigate the way that same value is enacted in public places, the assignment sequence demonstrates to students that private lives not only matter, but also shape public discourses, thus re-imagining what we deem significant when considering rhetorical situations. In doing so, the assignment sequence dismantles the binary and hierarchy that separate public and private, prioritizing the former. It also begins to help students connect values to concrete social and political issues in the public sphere. Public utterances and actions often begin with private experiences. The second assignment asks students to find and analyze non-public exchanges and activities that are often lost in public discourses, as it draws out the connections between private values and public actions.

The third project of English 1113 introduces conflicting points of view, but it does so while suspending persuasive argument. A purposeful rejection of the Rogerian essay that emphasizes common ground at the cost of difference, this assignment requires students to investigate the underlying values within a discordant point of view. Students are not asked to find common ground, nor are they required to take on the voice of the opposition to better understand a seemingly contradictory position. Instead they are tasked to listen closely for the values and context motivating a text they don't agree with. Differences in the text can breathe without requiring students to take the stance of the opposition (a move explicitly avoided in the unit). The assignment invites students to evaluate the underlying values, or cultural logics, of a conflicting point of view, which allows difference to remain as they respectfully investigate the logical explanations that underpin diverse perspectives. The goal of this project is to move students into a place of deep reflection, considering their beliefs alongside others, putting pressure on both. This assignment also demonstrates to students that, while they may disagree with a point of view, they can also find places in which their values intersect.

The final assignment of the first course is a formal public speech in which students present something meaningful they have learned from the course. This open-ended assignment is extremely popular with students and instructors, giving students practice in speaking to classmates while engaging them in reflection about their work—and their classmates' work—all semester.

Throughout the first sequence, students engage in rhetorical activities in new ways, as the assignments they complete necessitate an awareness and articulation of the sociohistorical context not only of writing, but of the values they hold and the way those values always necessarily inform how and why they write. The very parameters of the assignments push students to think and write about themselves and the world around them in new ways that encourage comprehension and compassion over persuasion, which becomes comprehension and compassion *before* persuasion as they move into the second course (English 1213).

**English 1213.** In the second course of the sequence, students enter rhetorical situations in more direct ways, but as they do, the curriculum continues to require them to linger inside their research, as Jacqueline Jones Royster and Gesa E Kirsch suggest. First, students choose a single topic that will be the subject of all four major assignments throughout the semester. Often in first-year writing courses when students move through various genres, they also shift topics, changing their focus from one project to the next. OU's English 1213 is intended to keep students focused on a single issue and dig deeply into it. Students have sixteen weeks rather than three to five to research in a way that leads not only to a nuanced understanding of their topic, but also an ethical and well-reasoned stance that considers the complexities of the rhetorical situation itself and the effects any action will have on various stakeholders. Students do not simply conduct research for three weeks and move to make a persuasive claim. They must first consider all the possibilities of the claim they will eventually make. By carefully investigating the context of the rhetorical situation, students are able to explore the way power, privilege, history, and influence shape current social issues.

The course begins by asking students to write an essay that identifies the history and background of a public controversy they want to write and speak about all semester and to explain both why the controversy exists and their connection to it. Project 1 requires students to explore this issue within a specific socio-historic context, inviting them once again to explore nuance and avoid oversimplification. By conducting in-depth research on an issue for which they will eventually create a persuasive argument, students must look past the binaries framed in news reports and appreciate the complexity of public issues.

The second assignment in the sequence turns students' attention from the context of the issue they have chosen to the stakeholders the issue affects. Because power exists in all rhetorical negotiations, it is critical that students learn how to analyze the influence and flow of power as they consider social and political topics. Project 2 requires students to conduct a stakeholder analysis so they recognize that every public argument acts on and is acted upon by a number of individuals and groups, all with various abilities to speak and influence the issue. As students listen carefully for voices that may easily be muted, seeking out not only those that possess privilege and are most often heard, they hold up many possible truths simultaneously, inviting what Ratcliffe refers to as "exiled excesses," or details that are cast aside for the sake of finding common ground or supporting a thesis. Students have the opportunity to pause and hear the voices silenced when opinion comes before investigation. Using stasis theory to understand the nature of the arguments that stakeholders are making (or should be making), they are then invited to explain why the public controversy remains unresolved.

The third project requires students to consider the needs of real audiences by emphasizing the perspective of stakeholders involved in a social or political issue. When writing Project 3, students select one of the stakeholders they researched during Project 2, and they write directly to that audience, making specific rhetorical decisions based on the needs, beliefs, and values of that audience. Using stasis theory to develop an argument tailored not for a general audience, but a very specific one, students are able to see their writing as both social and situated in a unique time and place. To be successful, students must appeal to the audience directly and address the stasis of the audience. In this way, students learn that while they are ready to offer a solution to climate change (stasis of policy), for example, their stakeholder depends on a job within the oil industry and is committed to denying the science (stasis of conjecture). Therefore, students must address the science as well as the economic challenges and opportunities posed by climate change (stasis of conjecture).

The fourth project is a formal public speech addressing the beliefs and values of students' classmates. Students have to continue doing research on their topic and must learn enough about their classmates to address them as an authentic audience, addressing the stasis that best accords with their classmates' positions on the issue. So, to use the same climate change example, students might find that their classmates are ready to address climate change (stasis of policy), so their speech might outline possible approaches and to persuade their classmates to advocate for one approach.

What is most **innovative** about the two courses is that they maintain inquiry without moving students to make traditional persuasive arguments. By delaying persuasion for one entire semester and half of another, students learn to linger within their research processes and “withhold judgment for a time and resist coming to closure too soon” (Royster and Kirsch 85). The very structure of the course arc demands a slowing down of the argument process. In the end, students do craft effective, persuasive arguments, but only after they have learned to rhetorically listen, to themselves and others, a skill that, according to Ratcliffe, has been neglected in rhetorical praxis. The first of the two-course sequence holds students at a place of pause so that they may, as Royster and Kirsch write, “pay attention to the world around them without rushing to judgment, to be open to chance discoveries, to new ways of seeing the world” (95) before they enter into a rhetorical situation or attempt to make their mark on the world. Rather than teaching students to outwit opponents, the goal of OU's curriculum is to help students strategically enter a controversy for the purpose of productively intervening in it. Using rhetorical listening, strategic contemplation, and a deeper investigation of context and stakeholders, OU's curriculum works to create ethical and thoughtful users of language that are reflective and mindful of others—that practice civic empathy—as they enter into rhetorical situations.

**This curriculum represents a substantial departure from earlier curricula.** Focused exclusively on the teaching of academic discourse, earlier versions of the 1113 curriculum directed student inquiry toward discourse communities, writing about writing, and writing about literacy. These themes, as implemented, were widely unpopular as measured by student evaluations and complaints to our office and upper administration. One key problem was that the older curricula severed students from their natural interests (a key problem noted by Eodice, et al.). In addition, there was no clear connection between 1113 and 1213, which in most years taught argumentation. President David Boren believed the university could not significantly improve retention issues if student satisfaction with FYC and with First Year Math (now being addressed) could not be addressed, and spent a decade agitating for change. OU now has a 92% retention rate between the first and second year, and OU FYC, a partner with the Provost's Emergency Retention Squad, officially shares credit for improving the first-year experience.

## ASSESSMENT

OU FYC began conducting a revitalized assessment project when the new curriculum was launched in Fall 2016 in order to gauge the success of the curriculum and reveal opportunities for revision. For us, a successful composition curriculum:

1. Creates a meaningful experience for students in both courses. We use the definition of *meaningful writing assignments* established by Eodice, Geller and Learner: A meaningful writing assignment a) offers students a chance to make a personal connection to their work, b) offers students significant instructor feedback, and c) offers students significant choice of topic.
2. Empowers students to engage in public deliberation in positive, productive ways.

3. Augments learning through incorporation of formal public speaking.
4. Improves student writing.

We measured our success in reaching these goals through *indirect* assessment of students and instructors, measuring student self-efficacy, and student and instructor perceptions of course curriculum and instruction. *Indirect* assessments were collected in the form of *impressionistic surveys* administered by instructors following each unit and *final perception surveys* administered online at the end of each semester. *Direct* assessment of goals 2 and 4, in the form of student writing scores, was completed (with IRB approval) at the end of the year using blinded student essay samples, holistic rubrics, and a team of scorers comprised of lecturers and GTAs who had been teaching the courses. In addition, we compared AY2015-16 teaching evaluations with those from AY2016-17.

### Evidence of Effective Curriculum

Program assessment, particularly indirect evaluation via final perception surveys, revealed overwhelmingly positive student responses and constructive instructor feedback.

- The vast majority of students reported that their experiences in both 1113 and 1213 were *valuable* and *meaningful* (**Goal 1**).
  - In 1113, more than **94%** of students agreed or strongly agreed that they valued their experience, and nearly **90%** of 1213 students likewise agreed or strong agreed to a valuable learning experience.
  - **92%** of students agreed or strongly agreed that all FYC assignments were *meaningful* to them.
- The vast majority—**97%**—of 1113 students agreed that they “felt a *personal connection* to the writing” (**Goal 1**). This statistic may, in part, be attributed to the fact that **97%** of 1113 students also strongly felt that they “had the freedom to choose a topic interesting” to them. Similarly, **96.5%** of 1213 students “felt a personal connection” to their coursework and **98%** agreed that they clearly had the freedom to work with topics interesting to them.
- Instructors were successful in providing *significant feedback* on student work (**Goal 1**). We were gratified to learn that **97%** of 1113 students and **94.19%** of 1213 students either agreed or strongly agreed that they received significant feedback on their course work throughout the semester.
- Student respondents from both courses—**87.77%** of 1113 students and **89.3%** of 1213 students—consistently claimed that class assignments prepared them *to respectfully engage in public discussions* (**Goal 2**) through exploration of their own and others’ values and arguments.
- Students overwhelmingly affirmed that FYC courses *improved their writing* (**Goal 4**). **91.64%** of 1113 student respondents and **88.5%** of 1213 student respondents agreed.
- *Public speaking* augmented student learning (**Goal 3**); both 1113 and 1213 include formal public speaking assignments and roughly three-fourths of students from both courses—**74%** in 1113 and **75.5%** in 1213—agreed that their class improved their confidence as public speakers.

Direct assessment through holistic scoring of randomly selected student responses to 1213 project 3 student essays revealed that the vast majority of students had learned the competencies required to engage and persuade a specific audience (**Goals 2 and 4**). Just over **80%** of the essays were holistically scored as *competent* (a score of 2 out of 4) or better, with roughly one-third (**32.5%**) of student essays scored as *strong* (a score of 3) or better, when tested for the skills emphasized in the curriculum. In our direct assessment, we asked scorers to not only rate essays for traditional skills such as organization, but also for students’ ability to respectfully and effectively address a



stakeholder in a public issue. To be considered competent, students had to demonstrate these abilities.

We also gathered instructor feedback after each unit of the 1113 and 1213 curriculum, and this feedback led to the productive revision of all assignment prompts and student learning objectives for AY 2017-18. Along with the elected lecturers on OU FYC Curriculum Committee, we were able to streamline and clarify language for prompts and student learning outcomes. Despite the need for such work, **100%** of instructor respondents to our end-of-year survey agreed or strongly agreed that they felt well prepared, given the resources and support provided by FYC, to teach both 1113 and 1213. Instructors reported that the new and returning summer instructor orientations were both instructive and inspiring. Several respondents also appreciated the constant availability of FYC office staff and administrators to answer questions and provide instructional support. Lastly, **96.15%** of instructors also enjoyed teaching the new curriculum; respondents were overall enthusiastic that the curriculum promoted in-depth exploration of values and public issues, and facilitated comprehensive student research.

**Because of student responses to our surveys and our direct assessment of their work, we conclude that the curriculum is meeting student and instructor needs.** The FYC Office will continue to devote resources to replicating and improving these initial assessment procedures each year. This data also provides us with a baseline for continued curricular revision and instructor evaluation. FYC staff hope to present findings from these assessment efforts at the CCCC and the Rhetoric Society of America's Biennial Conference in 2018.

### **Evidence of Effective Operation**

The College of Arts and Sciences invested in senior WPA consultants to visit OU FYC in 2014-15 to address problems with the program and curricula. They strongly recommended that a) an accomplished administrator and senior scholar be brought in to lead OU FYC, b) the program infrastructure receive attention, and c) full-time lecturers be hired to improve instruction. The Department of English also asked that the hiring of lecturers allow them to meet a long-term goal: lowering GTA workloads. With significant College investment, these initiatives have been met, and final GTA workload reductions should be in place by Fall 2018. Since 2015, the Program has had a strong operating budget, which includes travel/external support funds for lecturers, professional development funds, materials and infrastructure, assessment, and other expenses, totaling around \$71,000 (prior to 2015, there was no such funding). Faculty are provided either a laptop or desktop, and additional laptops are available for check-out, which is important, because most classrooms require a laptop for projection. The Program provides all the technology for the offices of directors, as well as a dedicated copier for all instructors. The Program resides on two floors of a beautiful, newly renovated space along with the English department, with a kitchen, mailroom, and conference rooms dedicated to FYC instructors. In addition, our work is supported by the Writing Center, directed by Dr. Michele Eodice, Associate Provost, and the University College.

Ongoing program-level assessment occurs each year through the College and a committee of lecturers, who formally assess the Director and her initiatives. In Spring 2017, prior to completion of curricular assessment, the OU FYC Program received a 5.0 (out of 5) for effectiveness from the College and recognition from the Provost's Office. OU FYC's Office Manager also receives a yearly evaluation and received equally high praise. Our lecturers are evaluated as faculty, receiving a peer evaluation from an elected committee and then from the Director and the College. In addition, overall student evaluations of teaching in OU FYC have improved dramatically under the new

curriculum (to 4.1 out of 5 for both courses). We conclude that we are not only meeting, but exceeding, our goals, and we are excited to share these details of our accomplishments with our colleagues at the CCCCs.

## COMMUNITY OUTREACH

OU FYC's curriculum has had an unexpected impact on our staff. Last spring, Mountford began fielding applications from community organizations from lecturers who were moved to join organizations their students studied in 1113. For example, one lecturer has become a court advocate for at-risk children; another has become a big sister for the Big Brothers/Big Sisters organization in Norman. After the presidential election, staff marched with students of color and reached out to students who felt at risk, particularly our Muslim students. Several instructors give workshops through the Center for Social Justice.

In Fall 2016, OU FYC also launched an annual event to correspond with NCTE's National Day of Writing, which we title "Celebration of Writing Day." Oklahoma writer Rilla Askew gave a keynote address, local writers and artists gave free workshops to the community, and students, staff, and faculty were invited to write one line of a community-composed Spooky Story at the Oklahoma Memorial Student Union. We also used that occasion to give student writing awards to the best writing in an 1113 class, a 1213 class, and for a multimodal or oral presentation. We also gave FYC teaching awards—to one outstanding MA GTA, PhD GTA, contingent faculty member, and lecturer. Our new budget enabled us to give substantial monetary awards to students and our faculty. Our 2017 Celebration of Writing will feature Jeanetta Calhoun Mish, the Oklahoma State Poet Laureate for 2017-18, more spooky stories, an expansion of our student writing award categories, writing workshops for OU staff as well as students, and FYC teaching awards, with nominations now so numerous that the lecturer committee tasked with making the awards will have difficult choices to make.

Finally, we are academic partners with numerous campus programs. We also provide a section of 1113 for the Start Sooner Program. In addition to CESL and the Center for Social Justice, we work closely with the Office of Academic Integrity, University College and the Provost's Office, and co-ordinate programming with OU's celebrated Writing Center.

## AUTHORS

This document was authored by Roxanne Mountford, Director; Amanda Klinger, Associate Director; Matthew Jacobsen, Courtney Jacobs, and Jason Opheim, Assistant Directors; and Cassandra Woody, former Assistant Director. The curriculum was written in collaboration with the above authors as well as Chris Edison and Rebecca Gerdes-McClain, former Assistant Directors.

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## APPENDIX A: Course Prompts

### English 1113: Principles of Composition I

#### Project 1

**Prompt:** Construct an essay that informs your audience about a value that is important to you, establishes your personal definition of the value, and demonstrates an intricate understanding of how your personal history or experiences have contributed to its creation and evolution.

**Project Description:** Have you thought about *why* you believe what you believe? What values underlie those beliefs, and where do these values come from? How is this value enacted in your life? Throughout this semester, we will thoroughly investigate values and the role they play in both individual and social action. For this project, we are going to explore the relationships between our personal experiences and values. To begin that investigation, you will choose a particular value that is important to you. The goal of this project is to think and write about your value in a critical way. To do this, you should consider how your personal beliefs and past experiences inform the value you have chosen. In other words, you will identify, analyze, and communicate how your personal experiences have shaped your values, making you the person you are today.

**Learning and Writing Goals:** You will engage in critical thinking and writing about how external experiences affect how you see the world. This assignment requires you to dig deep to gain a greater understanding of both the value itself and your relationship to it. As you engage in this critical analysis of your personal value, it is important that you avoid surface-level observations, but instead commit yourself to an in-depth process of reflection and investigation. To do this, you might explore the connection of your personal decisions, experiences, relationships, and activities. This assignment has no prescribed organization, so you should develop a structure specific to your unique understanding of your chosen value.

**Requirements:** A successful essay will:

- Clearly identify and define a personal value of importance to you
- Use specific details from your personal history, including stories, to explore how this value became important to you, and analyze how the value has evolved in your life
- Cite all sources in MLA style
- Be at least 1400-1750 words in length
- Be clear, effectively organized, and carefully edited

\*\*\*This assignment is worth 15% of your final grade

### English 1113: Principles of Composition I

#### Project 2

**Prompt:** Thoroughly research a local organization and craft an essay that demonstrates how that group's engagement with a social/political issue enacts or implies a meaningful, shared value.

**Project Description:** In the last unit, you explored a personal value. The focus of this project is group values. For this writing assignment, you will identify a local group within the university or community that you have never been a member of but may be interested in joining. Once you have chosen a group, you will identify and analyze both a meaningful value that the group holds in common and the way the group demonstrates that shared value. Your essay will draw on extensive primary and secondary research to explain *how* the value informs the group's action and *why* the group values what they do.

**Learning and Writing Goals:** You are now turning your attention from personal values to shared values and demonstrating to readers the ways those values are enacted in the public sphere. To accomplish the goals of this assignment, you will learn to engage in extensive primary and secondary research. Your essay should be specific and go into detail about the group. Like the first essay, this assignment has no prescribed organization, so you should choose a specific structure tailored to your research findings.

**Requirements:** A successful essay will:

- Be informative, detailed, and well-researched
- Include a strategic selection of primary and secondary research from credible sources
- Analyze a group that is new to you, meaning that you cannot be counted as one of its members
- Demonstrate an in-depth understanding of the connection between shared values and the way they are put into action
- Move beyond surface-level observations to demonstrate a thorough understanding of your subject matter
- Cite all sources in MLA style
- Be at least 1750-2000 words in length
- Be clear, effectively organized, and carefully edited

\*\*\*This assignment is worth 25% of your final grade

### English 1113: Principles of Composition I

#### Project 3

**Prompt:** Explore a text that offers a point of view that differs from your own on a current social or political issue, analyze the values present, and demonstrate how those values shape the author's argument.

**Project Description:** As we have seen throughout this semester, we all have reasons for believing and thinking as we do. And yet, a persistent problem with public arguments is that we often make no attempt to understand any perspective other than our own and frequently believe that we have no connection to those whose arguments differ from ours. Such arguments are worse than unproductive—they undermine our civic systems and relationships with one another, leading to greater division in our public and private lives. Using values to understand what motivates the arguments of those we disagree with offers the possibility for understanding and connection.

You have now written about personal values and how groups enact shared values. For this assignment, you will explore a text that offers a point of view that differs from your own on a current social or political issue. You will then find and analyze the values present in your chosen text that shape the author's argument, which may or may not be explicitly stated. Rather than arguing for or against the author, explain to readers *why* the author of the text holds the position they do and what values connect to their position, using background information and textual evidence to support your claims.

**Learning and Writing Goals:** The goal of this assignment is to demonstrate a complex understanding of how values inform public arguments, even—or maybe especially—when we may not agree with those arguments. In this assignment, you might learn that you share similar values with the author but draw different conclusions about how to enact those values. As you present the values in the text, you may draw on your own values and beliefs or opinions, pointing out places of similarity and difference. Be sure as you do this, however, to focus on the values of the text and to present the perspective in a manner that is fair and comprehensive. A key to this assignment is keeping an open mind and a neutral tone based on analysis rather than persuasion or argumentation.

**Requirements:** A successful essay will:

- Identify the specific arguments of a chosen text
- Focus on the values within the text and present the perspective in a manner that is fair and comprehensive

- Include evidence from the text to support your claims
- Include primary and secondary research to provide background information about the text itself as well as the complexity of the social or political issue
- Avoid arguing for or against a point of view
- Cite all sources in MLA style
- Be at least 1500-1750 words in length
- Be clear, effectively organized, and carefully edited

\*\*\*This assignment is worth 25% of your final grade

## English 1113: Principles of Composition I

### Project 4

**Prompt:** Give a 5-7 minute speech designed to inform your classmates about an aspect of your work, your classmates' work, or a class concept that was particularly meaningful to you.

**Project Description:** Throughout this semester, we've been talking about values and their relationship to what we believe, how we act in the world, and how they draw us toward people and push us away from others. That's a lot to chew on. Now we're interested in hearing from you about what you found especially meaningful about all of this, and a reflection on why it was meaningful.

As long as you use material from the semester to develop your speech, you may approach this assignment in any number of ways. However you choose to present your insight, you must be sure that your speech makes a connection to your audience and uses concrete evidence and specific examples from this semester's work to support major claims. Throughout this semester we have been practicing informal public speaking, but for this assignment you will want to develop a more formal speech, prepared with an audience in mind. Be sure to clearly state your intended purpose and use an overt organizational structure so your audience can follow you. You may use visual aids where appropriate, keeping in mind that those aids should clarify or enhance the speech, not distract from it.

**Learning, Writing, and Speaking Goals:** Creating a prepared speech is another kind of composing task. After you have chosen a topic, you will learn to draft and revise a working outline of the speech, developing an appropriate organizational strategy for the topic, audience, purpose, and length of your speech. You will learn to distill the working outline into a speaking outline that you will transfer to notecards. Notecards should serve as reminders, and not distract you from making eye contact with your classmates. We will practice using effective body language that enhances rather than distracts from your speech. A successful speech is on topic, interesting, and informative; it is also well-planned and well-rehearsed.

**Requirements:** A successful speech will:

- Be clearly prepared, drawing on a working outline
- Inform your classmates about an aspect of your work, your classmates' work, or a class concept that was particularly meaningful to you and explain why it was meaningful to you
- Demonstrate purposeful rhetorical decisions in the organization and delivery that guide the audience's experience of the speech
- Integrate compelling examples from this semester
- Account for the expectations of your intended audience
- Be 5-7 minutes in length
- Be clear, effectively organized, and (in the case of the outline) carefully edited

\*\*\*This assignment is worth 15% of your final grade

## English 1213: Principles of Composition II

### Rant Assignment

**Prompt:** To help you decide on a topic for your Unit 1 essay, deliver an informal “rant” to your classmates on an issue of public interest you care about and are personally connected to.

(Here, *rant* means a passionately spoken—yet polite—speech of 1 ½ to 2 minutes in length.)

Your objective is to explain to your classmates why your chosen issue is both important to you and an issue of social importance. You might want to draw on research and data to support your claims, and consider drawing on the core values connected to your issue. The goal is not to take a stance on the issue, as this will come in later assignments. This assignment serves to help you articulate why this issue is important to you, while also providing an opportunity to practice public speaking in a low-stakes environment. Keeping *audience* in mind, you should take care to rant in a way that won’t offend your classmates. (One way to avoid this is to explain *why you care* about a topic without commanding your audience to behave in a certain way.)

I will be looking for thoughtful responses in your rants. Remember, an issue is not just a topic; there must be some problem containing conflict or disagreement. Your rant shouldn’t be about individuals or organizations (ex: why you don’t like a person, group, or organization). If you are unsure if your topic is appropriate, please ask me.

**Requirements** A successful rant will:

- Be delivered to the class without a script (that is, not read)
- Identify an issue
- Express why the issue is important to the public
- Maintain a respectful tone
- Be between 1 ½ to 2 minutes in length

## English 1213: Principles of Composition II

### Project 1

**Prompt:** Building on your rant, introduce the background and context of a current public issue and demonstrate its importance.

**Project Description:** This course will help you explore multiple angles of an issue in which you are personally invested while refining your speaking and writing skills to better prepare you for public debate. Part of this means challenging our tendency to oversimplify current social/political issues as two-sided, left-and-right, blue-and-red, and right-and-wrong. In writing this essay, you will locate and analyze a variety of academic and popular sources in order to understand the scope of the conversation surrounding your chosen issue. You will identify the important historical and contextual elements of the rhetorical situation specific to your issue. You may choose to draw on your personal connection to the issue as a starting point for explaining why the issue is important and expand out from there. As part of this project, you will develop a working bibliography of at least 8 sources, some of which you will use in your essay, and some of which will help you develop Project 2. All sources used in the essay must be cited.

To sustain your interest throughout the semester, it is important that you choose an issue meaningful to you. For this project, you will persuade the class that your chosen issue is also important to the public. To do so, you’ll need to know as much about the issue as you can, engaging in research and analysis to discover convincing points and evidence of the issue’s importance. Keep in mind that the issue must be truly debatable. For example, while distracted driving is an issue of public importance, most reasonable people agree that it is wrong. Therefore, crafting an argument about distracted driving in later assignments will be difficult.

**Learning and Writing Goals:** This project will lay the groundwork for Projects 2-4. In the process of writing it, you will learn to identify relevant sources for your project and uncover important arguments in the

debate as well as the values present in those arguments. Learning the background of the issue is an important step for identifying ways to intervene in the debate itself. In the final two projects, you will have the opportunity to convince your audience of your position on the issue. Until then, you will learn to resist advocating for a position on an issue until you have considered other perspectives.

**Requirements** A successful essay will:

- Demonstrate that a public issue currently being debated is important enough to merit our attention
- Provide appropriate background and context of the issue
- Cite all sources in MLA style
- Include a working bibliography of at least 8 sources, which represent a variety of positions toward the issue
- Be 1200-1500 words in length
- Be clear, effectively organized, and carefully edited

\*\*\*This assignment is worth 15% of your final grade

## English 1213: Principles of Composition II

### Project 2

**Prompt:** Analyze at least five relevant stakeholders (individuals and groups invested in or affected by the issue), employing *stasis theory* to understand the arguments being offered on your issue in the public sphere.

**Project Description:** It is easy to dismiss those we disagree with, turning them into the nameless, faceless opposition. But in fact, no issue is only two-sided, and all issues affect more than the two loudest voices. For this project, you will use primary and secondary research to identify your issue's relevant stakeholders and analyze their arguments and motivations. Your task is to find stakeholders who represent the full complexity of the issue. While many stakeholders are active advocates, others may be silent stakeholders, unaware of how the issue impacts them or unable to argue on their own behalf. However, so that you can analyze the nature of the public debate, you should choose at least four active stakeholders (out of a total of at least five) to research. For each stakeholder, you should identify who they are, their relationship to the issue, and, where possible, what they are arguing and the values that connect to their position.

You aren't making an argument about which stakeholders are correct or which ideas and positions you personally like best. Instead, you will explore some of the following questions: What are the ideas or reactions of those involved? Why or how do the different parties disagree with one another? Who is or isn't speaking? What are their primary concerns or goals for their ideas or positions? Exploring why each stakeholder acts on or reacts to the issue as they do, you will apply stasis theory to better understand the nature of disagreements among the groups who are weighing in on your issue.

**Learning and Writing Goals:** This assignment will enable you to find, explore, and rhetorically analyze conversations surrounding public issues and prepare you to effectively contribute to them. To do so, you need to discover the people who are in charge of, invested in, and/or affected by those issues, as well as perspectives that are represented in the public debate. By learning stasis theory, you will be able to isolate and describe when and where people are speaking at cross purposes or focusing on different aspects of the issue. Analyzing the arguments made by your stakeholders will allow you a fuller understanding of the public debate surrounding the issue, as well as prepare you to tailor your argument in the *next* essay, which must be written to one of your stakeholders. Doing so will ultimately help you locate potential sites of intervention, identifying *whom* you need to persuade and *how* you might go about it in any situation, while also helping to clarify and refine your own views.

**Requirements:** A successful essay will:

- Identify at least five relevant stakeholders and analyze their positions, four of which have to be active advocates
- Be effectively organized around a thesis

- Apply stasis theory to the debate surrounding the issue
- Conduct and synthesize relevant primary and secondary research
- Avoid persuasive argument or premature judgment of differing positions
- Cite all sources in MLA style
- Be 1500-2000 words as well
- Be clear, effectively organized, and carefully edited

\*\*\*This assignment is worth 25% of your final grade

## English 1213: Principles of Composition II

### Project 3

**Prompt:** Write an essay designed to persuade a stakeholder to change their mind or to influence their actions on the issue.

**Project Description:** Now it is time to argue your position. For this project, you should choose one of the stakeholders from Project 2 whom you disagree with and want to persuade. You may *not* choose your classmates for this assignment, even if your issue is campus-related (that opportunity comes in the next assignment). The audience you choose should be currently indifferent to or resistant to your idea or position. While you will use the information you discovered in Projects 1 and 2 as a foundation for this project, you must do additional research that will allow you to craft an appropriate and persuasive argument based on your position that is tailored to the *audience's* expectations, background, and values.

You may use any of the argumentative forms studied throughout the course to structure your argument, but you'll want to think carefully about choosing a form that works for what and to whom you are arguing. Your audience's beliefs and values will decide which stasis approach you will use in your argument. For instance, if you are interested in changing the minds of climate change deniers, you shouldn't use a proposal argument. They aren't interested in your *solutions* to climate change because they don't believe it exists. Instead, you would want to make an argument of fact or of definition, because doing so would allow you to construct an argument that explicitly addresses their point of view and values.

**Learning and Writing Goals:** All semester you have been researching and considering an issue you care deeply about: now is your opportunity to think about *who* you need to convince, *what* you need to convince them of, and *how* you can most effectively get them to consider your ideas. In the real world, you may never be able to convince everyone who disagrees with or is indifferent to your perspective. But you *can* use rhetorical analysis to discover the heart of disagreements and craft arguments that meaningfully interact with others' values and beliefs. This will not always result in changed minds, but it has a much better chance of engaging someone in a real conversation and at least getting them to consider your ideas. Since this argument will be the culmination of all of your work in 1113 and 1213, we want to see you argue thoughtfully, intentionally, and strategically, seeking to persuade your audience by addressing the *particular moment of stasis* where they will most likely be affected by your argument.

**Requirements:** A successful essay will:

- Offer an argument that persuades a particular stakeholder to change their position on the issue
- Incorporate relevant primary and secondary research to support arguments
- Be effectively organized around an appropriate argumentative form for your intended audience and goals
- Cite all sources in MLA style
- Be 1500 to 2000 words
- Be clear, effectively organized, and carefully edited

\*\*\*This assignment is worth 25% of your final grade



## English 1213: Principles of Composition II

### Project 4

**Prompt:** Deliver a prepared 6-8 minute speech designed to change your classmates' perspective or actions, using presentation aids (e.g., slides or video) to enhance your argument, and effectively respond to questions from your audience (for 2 minutes following your speech).

**Project Description:** Now that you've persuaded a stakeholder to change their mind or their actions, you will try your hand at persuading your classmates. Your classmates will have the responsibility of asking you questions after your speech, which will give you a chance to *deliberate* with them on the issue. Some of the research you used to write Project 3 will be relevant, but because you are addressing a new audience in a new medium, your specific argument will change, both in content and structure, and likely require new research. For instance, a student addressing a religiously-motivated audience on the issue of climate change in Project 3 could use religious arguments and examples, such as redefining stewardship (argument of definition). However, since most college students agree that climate change is real, the student could, if she wanted, deliver a speech for Project 4 arguing for necessary changes needed to address climate change (argument of proposal) or evaluating current efforts to address climate change (argument of evaluation).

**Learning, Writing, and Speaking Goals:** You will learn to exercise rhetorical awareness in order to outline, organize, and deliver a persuasive speech tailored to a specific audience, in this case your OU classmates. While your position will be the same as in Project 3, *how* you deliver and support your argument will change. You will learn to adapt your evidence and argument for the medium of public speaking, meaning you will verbally cite sources, move and gesture with purpose, emphasize major claims, and deploy visuals to help illustrate your argument to the audience. You will also learn to be an active audience, developing insightful questions and productive responses to your peers. By adding public speaking to your argumentative repertoire, you will be prepared to participate effectively in public deliberation.

**Requirements:** A successful working speech outline will:

- Adhere to conventions of formal speech outlines
- Fulfill the requirements of successful speeches contained below
- Cite all sources in MLA style
- Be 750-1000 words
- Be clear, effectively organized, and carefully edited

**Requirements:** A successful speech will:

- Offer a persuasive argument that addresses your audience's beliefs and expectations
- Incorporate relevant primary and secondary research to support arguments
- Be effectively organized, considering your intended audience and goals
- Include relevant and effective visual aids
- Be effectively delivered, using a clear voice and appropriate body movements and gestures
- Verbally cite sources
- Be between 6 and 8 minutes in length
- Respond productively to questions and feedback from the audience

\*\*\*This assignment is worth 15% of your final grade

## APPENDIX B: Short Sample Syllabi

### English 1113: Principles of Composition I

#### Course Description

This course is designed to help you develop practices of inquiry and understanding to prepare you to think and write in a diverse set of social, academic, and professional contexts. In this course you will investigate and write about social and political issues of interest to you with the goal of learning more about the values that inform your own beliefs and the beliefs of the community and people around you. The semester's writing assignments will expose you to a variety of research methods suited to the demands of each particular assignment. These methods allow you to lead and engage in productive conversations about issues of political and social importance. You will also have the opportunity to design and deliver a formal speech, a skill that will be of value in English 1213 and beyond. In order to accomplish these goals, you will reflect on how your past experiences have shaped your personal values, research how groups in the local community and/or university enact shared values, and analyze the competing value systems that animate the social and political issues in the world around you. In summary, this course will teach you to use inquiry and writing as tools capable of teaching you more about yourself, the communities you live in, and the values that are vital to both.

#### By the end of this course, you will be able to:

- Use writing for exploration, discovery, comprehension, problem solving, and the construction of nuanced claims
- Compose and deliver essays and speeches that demonstrate rhetorical awareness
- Engage thoughtfully with other perspectives in a manner that encourages, rather than curtails, public discussion and participation
- Respond effectively to writing tasks without being given a prescribed organizational form to follow
- Develop flexible and effective strategies for organizing, revising, practicing/rehearsing, editing, and proofreading (for grammar and mechanics) to improve development and clarity of ideas
- Find, analyze, and correctly cite primary and secondary sources to support and develop personal points of view, understand the views of others, and connect actions to values
- Analyze texts to reveal how writers and speakers make rhetorical choices in the service of an intended purpose or goal
- Define and practice revision strategies for essays and speeches that locate areas for improvement and effectively target them
- Develop considerate and constructive strategies for responding to peer work

#### Required Materials

- *Everything's An Argument*. 7th Edition. Custom Edition for the University of Oklahoma English 1113 & 1213. Andrea Lunsford & John J. Ruszkiewicz  
ISBN: 978-1-319-08604-6
- *FieldWorking: Reading and Writing Research*. 4th Edition. Custom Edition for the University of Oklahoma English 1113 & 1213. Bonnie Stone Sunstein & Elizabeth Chiseri-Strater  
ISBN: 978-1-319-08603-9
- Readings posted to Canvas
- Access to a computer
- USB flash storage or online document storage

**Grades:** Unit 1—15%; Unit 2—25%; Unit 3—25%; Unit 4—15%; Homework—10%; Peer Review—10%

Your final course grade will be determined from the following scale: A= 100-90; B= 89.9-80; C= 79.9-70; D= 69.9-60; F= 59.9 and below

[Note: Policy statements omitted]

### Daily Syllabus

- Week 1:** Introduction; discuss goals of course; discuss syllabus; introduction to values; review Project 1 prompt; values vs. beliefs; discuss readings & new perspectives on writing; inquiry and exploration in Unit 1; values vs. things I value; Project 1 brainstorm. Due: Review syllabus; *EA* “Beginning”
- Week 2:** Refine focus on values; discuss exploring & inquiry; map personal experiences & history of values; reflection: developing specific details of personal experiences and/or history; synthesize personal experiences & critical reflections; discuss assigned reading, focusing on values, actions, & narrative approach; review Project 1 prompt; developing analysis & complicating the value; crafting nuanced thesis statements; developing details & narrative. Due: *EA* “Exploring”; Malcom X’s “A Homemade Education”; Reading Response and Value Experiences assignment
- Week 3:** Discuss assigned reading; focusing on values, narrative, & organization; organizing Project 1; prewriting strategies and outlining; continue description & details; using time markers & transitions; crafting introductions & conclusions; in-class outline workshop. Due: Reading reflection, David Foster Wallace’s Commencement address to Kenyon College; *EA* “Planning and Replanning”; outline draft for Project 1, post to discussion board
- Week 4:** Workshop day; understanding plagiarism & academic integrity (including MLA); peer review expectations, process, & technique; in-class peer review: I heard, I noticed, I wondered; discuss revision strategies for draft, accounting for feedback; in-class peer review & editing. Due: Project 1 rough draft (one printed copy); *EA* “Plagiarism and Academic Integrity”; continue revising (bring two printed copies); compare Project 1 prompt to revision; bring two printed copies of latest draft
- Week 5:** Reflection on Unit 1; introduce Unit 2 and Project 2; brainstorming for Project 2; asking research questions/identifying effective forms of research; introduction to primary & secondary research options; researching groups; refining research questions; researching to listen; interview strategies, etiquette, & ethics; interview practice; drafting interview questions. Due: Project 1 revision based on peer review & instructor feedback; submit revision plan; *FW* “Researching People: The Collaborative Listener”; *EA* “Asking Questions,” “On Interviewing”
- Week 6:** Falling down the rabbit hole: research & drafting as continually developing; discuss ways groups enact shared values/how shared values motivate social & political action; analyzing how groups enact shared values/analyzing such values in texts; discovering connections between organization, values, & social issue; developing insights by complicating values & a nuanced thesis statement reflecting the prompt; workshopping analytical lists; invention strategies drawing on research. Due: *FW* “Positioning: Reading and Writing about Yourself,” “Understanding Positioning: Checking in on Yourself,” “Getting Permission,” “Representative Artifacts”; Project 1 final draft; continue research on group; write brief analytical list (with explanation) of how values of group are enacted through social/political communication & action
- Week 7:** Synthesizing primary & secondary sources; paraphrasing & quoting; practicing organizational strategies; planning development: drafting, mapping, research matrices, outlines; review Project 2 prompt & unit goals; developing Project 2; planning/outline peer review; paragraph structure; MLA formatting & citations; Workshopping drafts; sign-up for instructor conferences. Due: *EA* “Using Sources”; post Project 2 outline plan to Canvas; bring printed copy of Project 2 draft
- Week 8:** Conference with instructor; articulate revision goals; peer review Project 2 rough draft. Due: Submit Project 2 draft, including Works Cited, before conference; bring two printed copies of revised draft for peer review; *EA* “Documenting Sources,” “Really Responding”
- Week 9:** Reflect on Unit 2; introduce Project 3 prompt; active & rhetorical listening; political/social issues & values; brainstorming: identify a political/social issue; redefining “argument”; introduce rhetorical situation and analysis; close reading & emotionally charged rhetoric; responding to differing opinions; finding sources: libraries research. Due: Draft revision plan; revise Project 2 based on peer review & instructor feedback; *EA* “Arguing”

- Week 10:** Mapping rhetorical situation & values; tracing values; writing that seeks to understand, not convince; nuanced understanding of a text's argument; avoiding inflammatory or argumentative language when analyzing sources; practice rhetorical listening; developing a nuanced thesis that reflects the prompt. Due: Project 2 final draft; EA "Rhetorical Analysis"; "Two Sources & Analysis" activity
- Week 11:** Identifying points of commonality & divergence; digging deeper: complicating values; structure/meaning in written texts; organizing an essay anchored by inquiry rather than argumentation; synthesis in Unit 3; workshop essay plans; developing essay plans; workshopping major essay components; sentence-level work; sign up for conference. Due: Bring in three sources, including primary text and two documents providing context or deeper understanding of political or social issue primary text discusses; plan Project 3 essay; bring one printed copy of Project 3 first draft
- Week 12:** Conference with instructor; peer review; revising Project 3; MLA citations; editing. Due: two printed copies of revised, update draft for peer review; revise draft based on peer & instructor feedback and bring two more printed copies of latest revision to class
- Week 13:** Review Unit 3; introduce Project 4; effective speeches; brainstorming; meaningful learning moments; sample speeches & analysis; formal speech conventions; process: developing a successful speech; developing content. Due: Revision plan for Project 3; EA 623-634 on public speaking and speech preparation process; Project 3 final draft; "Meaningful Learning Moment" assignment
- Week 14:** Continue audience analysis; determining speech purpose; developing/gathering supporting material; speech viewing & analysis; introduction to speech outlines. Due: EA "Analyzing Audience," "Selecting a Topic and Purpose," & "Developing Supporting Material"; complete "Developing Your Speech" activity
- Week 15:** Analyzing sample speeches; developing main points/substance in speech; organizing/outlining successful speeches; workshopping *working* outline; delivery: discussion & practice; managing speech anxiety; visual aids; speech delivery: using language, your voice & body language. Due: *working* outline draft; EA "Using Language"; revise outline using feedback from classmates
- Week 16:** Peer review: visual aids; speech practice in small groups with notecards; course evaluation; deliver speeches in class. Due: submit outline and visual aids to Canvas

## English 1213: Principles of Composition I

Fall 2017

### Course Description

Building on the writing, research, inquiry, and revision skills developed in 1113, you will locate an issue of public deliberation that personally interests you and explore it as an object of study throughout the semester. To develop a complex and sophisticated understanding, you will conduct research on the issue's context and implications for a broad range of stakeholders, revealing how and why people hold differing views. You will use rhetorical theory to analyze the stakeholders' arguments, identifying productive sites to intervene in the public debate. Finally, as the culmination of the course, you will construct a written argument designed to persuade a particular stakeholder to change their mind or influence their actions on your issue. Then, you will adapt your argument for a new audience and the medium of public speaking. Because the writing and speaking tasks in 1213 may be approached any number of ways, you will learn to develop organizational strategies uniquely suited to the particular needs of your project and its purpose. To support your analysis of the issue and your persuasive arguments, you will also study various types of argument, engage in both primary and secondary research, and practice revision and editing strategies that will help you produce polished and effective documents. By the end of this course, you will be prepared to encounter new academic writing and speaking projects and engage in public conversations about issues important to you.

### By the end of this course, you will be able to:

- Explore and intervene in an issue of public interest and deliberation using writing and speaking

- Write and deliver persuasive arguments grounded in scholarly research that respond to audience needs and expectations
- Conduct relevant primary and secondary research on a subject, effectively presenting and synthesizing research findings
- Use advanced rhetorical strategies, including stasis theory, for analyzing arguments and developing ideas
- Refine speaking, writing, and visual communication skills, focusing on matters of construction, design, and delivery style
- Apply revision strategies to your writing, drawing on feedback from your instructor and classmates
- Develop considerate and constructive strategies for responding to peer work
- Serve as an active and courteous audience able to respond productively to public speaking

### Required Materials

- *Everything's An Argument*. 7th Edition. Custom Edition for the University of Oklahoma English 1113 & 1213. Andrea Lunsford & John J. Ruszkiewicz  
ISBN: 978-1-319-08604-6
- *FieldWorking: Reading and Writing Research*. 4th Edition. Custom Edition for the University of Oklahoma English 1113 & 1213. Bonnie Stone Sunstein & Elizabeth Chiseri-Strater  
ISBN: 978-1-319-08603-9
- Readings posted to Canvas
- Access to a computer
- USB flash storage or online document storage

**Grades:** Unit 1—15%; Unit 2—25%; Unit 3—25%; Unit 4—15%; Homework—10%;  
Peer Review—10%

Your final course grade will be determined from the following scale: A= 100-90; B= 89.9-80; C= 79.9-70;  
D= 69.9-60; F= 59.9 and below

[Note: Policy statements omitted]

### Daily Syllabus

**Week 1:** Introduction to curriculum; introduce rant and Project 1; discuss rhetorical situations and context; read *EA* "Finding Evidence," "Evaluating Sources." Due: credible source for chosen issue

**Week 2:** Review audience etiquette & ethical speaking habits; deliver rants; review OU Library sources; discuss bibliographies and research plans; practice integrating sources in Project 1. Due: rant; *EA* "Ethical Public Speaking," "Listeners and Speakers"; 3-4 secondary sources on issue

**Week 3:** Practice incorporating personal experience and commentary; review sample essays; discuss expectations for academic writing; brainstorm structural approaches to Project 1; discuss ethical considerations of citation; practice MLA citation strategies. Due: Sample student essays; excerpts from essay on effective use of 1<sup>st</sup> person in academic writing; *EA* "Plagiarism and Academic Integrity," "Documenting Sources."

**Week 4:** Articulate goals and strategies for effective peer review; define and discuss editing and proofreading; practice editing; in-class Peer Review. Due: Project 1 Rough Draft; comments for peer review; *EA* "On Revising"; Purdue OWL MLA 8 Sample Paper; Revise draft for citation form.

**Week 5:** Introduce Project 2; discuss Burkean parlor; construct onion diagrams; connect stakeholders to types of arguments using stasis theory; discuss forms of primary research; practice interviewing; introduce and practice rhetorical analysis. Due: *EA* "Joining the Conversation," "Collecting Data on Your Own," "Assessing Field Research," "Rhetorical Analysis."

- Week 6:** Explore and apply stasis theory; introduce synthesis; brainstorm secondary research for stakeholder analysis; discuss sample essay. Due: Project 1 Final Draft; EA “Reading and Understanding Arguments”; narrow stakeholders to 5; interviews scheduled; annotated bibliography.
- Week 7:** Brainstorm and explore organizational structures for Project 2; effective introductions; Peer Review. Due: sample student essays; introduction and synthesis paragraphs; Project 2 Rough Draft.
- Week 8:** Student-Teacher Conferences. Rivalry Day: No class on Friday. Due: 3 focused questions or concerns you have about your draft.
- Week 9:** Introduce Project 3; watch Cohen, “For Argument’s Sake”; articulate positions and opinions; identify appropriate stakeholder; guidelines for further research; arguments of fact, definition, evaluation, and proposal. Due: EA “Arguments of Fact,” “Arguments of Definition,” “Evaluations,” “Proposals”; select stakeholder audience for Project 3.
- Week 10:** Practice writing tailored to stakeholders’ beliefs, values, expectations; review artistic and inartistic proofs; discuss sample essays; identify fallacies of argument. Due: Project 2 Final Draft; EA “Fallacies of Argument”; choose argumentative structure for stakeholder (explain in writing)
- Week 11:** Using concessions and counterarguments in each argumentative form; choosing effective language and style for argument; discuss sample arguments; essay workshop. Due: EA “Style in Arguments”; introductory paragraphs; draft of Project 2 for workshop.
- Week 12:** “Devil’s advocate” peer review; structural issues; stylistic issues. Due: Project 3 Rough Draft; comments on peers essays.
- Week 13:** Introduce Project 4; brainstorm features of OU peer audience; oral organization for arguments; class improvisation exercises; research needed for change in audience/argument structure. Due: EA “Analyzing the Audience,” “Organizing the Body of the Speech,” “Selecting an Organizational Pattern,” “Outlining the Speech,” “Developing Source Material,” “Citing Sources in Your Speech”; write comparison between audiences for Project 3 and 4 and plan for change in approach.
- Week 14:** Define visual rhetoric; designing effective presentation aids; Thanksgiving break. Due: Project 3 Final Draft; EA “Visual Rhetoric,” “Speaking with Presentation Aids.”
- Week 15:** Practice effective delivery; peer review outlines; brainstorm strategies for answering audience questions; watch “Q&A: 101” video; practice delivery speeches in small groups with peer review. Due: EA “Your Voice in Delivery,” “Your Body in Delivery”; watch Cuddy’s “Your Body Language May Shape Who You Are”
- Week 16:** Deliver speeches; Course reflection and celebration. Due: upload final speaking outline to Canvas; upload slides to our Google drive; Project 4 due.

## APPENDIX C: Professional Development

### Orientation:

Our distinctive approach to new-instructor orientation is *not* to address lower-order teaching skills such as developing a teaching ethos, but rather to work intensively on knowledge and skills needed to teach our curriculum. All instructors write/deliver the assignments required in 1113 and 1213 each evening, and they read the theory and praxis behind the curriculum. Each day of the 8-day orientation focuses on one unit of the course, including the student learning outcomes and special complexities of teaching the unit. Instructors engage in activities they could use with their students. We provide lunch each day, often using part of the lunch hour to introduce supporting units in English and on campus. The Orientation is widely popular with instructors, since the OU FYC team keeps up a lively pace.

**Required Coursework (all graduate students):** English 5113: Teaching College Composition (3 credits)

### Guest Speakers:

2016-17 AY: William Keith (Orientation); Andrea Lunsford

2017-18 AY: Richard E. Miller; Krista Ratcliffe

### Professional Development Workshops:

#### *Fall 2016:*

- Developing and Using Rubrics, Sept. 19 & 20. Facilitators: Cheyenne Riggs, Lami Fofana, and Katie Shearer
- Emergency Preparedness Training, Sept. 30. Facilitators: Speakers from OUPD, OU Fire, and OU Emergency Preparedness
- Raising Student Evaluations, Oct 3 & 4. Facilitators: Amanda Klinger and Jennifer Chancellor. Panelists: Roxanne Mountford, Rhonda Kyncl, Jason Lubinski, David Kelly, Katie Shearer, Stephanie Weaver
- Offering Feedback on Student Writing, Oct. 25. Facilitator: Molly Lehman
- Teaching Creativity: Using the Tools of Storytelling in the Composition Classroom, Oct. 27. Facilitators: Eddie Malone and Karen Feiner
- Assessing Speeches, Nov. 16 & 17. Facilitators: Amanda Klinger and Melissa Antonucci

#### *Spring 2017:*

- Getting the Most Out of Class Discussions, Feb. 8 & 9. Facilitators: Jason Lubinski, Melissa Antonucci, and David Kelly
- A Workshop with Andrea Lunsford, Feb. 24. Speaker: Andrea Lunsford. Facilitator: Roxanne Mountford
- Addressing Academic Dishonesty, Mar. 6 & 7. Facilitators: Katie Shearer, Breea Clark, and William Spain
- Inclusive Teaching for Different Abilities and Learning Styles, Apr. 3. Facilitator: Cheyenne Riggs
- Developing Online Courses, Apr. 4. Facilitator: Mia Martini
- Troubleshooting Awkward Moments: A Roundtable, Apr. 27 & 28. Facilitators: Rhonda Kyncl, Molly Lehman, Jason Lubinski, and Annemarie Mulkey
- Teaching in the Computer-Mediated Classroom, May 18. Facilitators: Amanda Klinger, Katie Shearer, and Mia Martini.

#### *Fall 2017:*

- Living on a Grad Student Budget, Sept. 4. Facilitators: Jennifer Chancellor and Jason Opheim
- A Workshop with Richard E. Miller, Aug. 30. Speaker: Richard E. Miller. Facilitator: Roxanne Mountford
- Inclusivity in the Classroom, Sept. 12. Facilitators: Roxanne Mountford and FYC Staff.
- Teaching Research Skills, Sept. (TBD) Facilitators: Molly Lehman and Kelli Alvarez
- Teaching Rhetorical Listening, Oct. (TBD) Facilitators: Roxanne Mountford, Kasey Woody, and FYC Staff.
- Gender in the Classroom, Oct. (TBD) Facilitators: TBD.
- Teaching Style and Delivery in Speeches, Nov. (TBD) Facilitator: Melissa Antonucci.

## APPENDIX D: WPA Biography

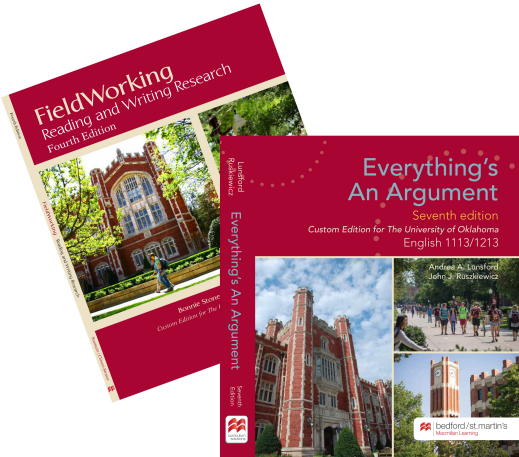
Roxanne Mountford is Professor of English and Director of the First-Year Composition Program and the Composition, Rhetoric, and Literacy Studies Program at the University of Oklahoma. She teaches courses in writing and rhetoric at the undergraduate and graduate level. In her academic work, she studies rhetoric in the United States, particularly rhetorical education and gender issues in rhetoric. Her first book, *The Gendered Pulpit: Preaching in American Protestant Spaces* (Southern Illinois UP, 2003), develops a material and cultural understanding of communicative events in order to explore gender norms in the art of preaching. The book combines theoretical, ethnographic, and historical methods to define the concept of rhetorical space. Her second book (with Michelle Ballif and Diane Davis), *Women's Ways of Making It in Rhetoric and Composition* (Routledge, 2008), offers primary and secondary research on women's career paths in the field. Her third book, *Rhetoric and Writing Studies in the New Century: Historiography, Pedagogy, and Politics* (Southern Illinois UP, 2017), is co-edited with Cheryl Glenn and inspired by the key research questions that motivated Andrea Lunsford during her career.

Prof. Mountford's current project explores the relationship of writing and public speaking in high schools and colleges in the United States in the twentieth century prior to 1971. She is particularly interested in the communications movement in general education, which engaged interdisciplinary faculties in teaching reading, writing, listening, and speaking through an integrated vision of these communication arts. With Bill Keith, she has worked to develop an interdisciplinary perspective on rhetorical education that bridges rhetorical expertise in Writing Studies and Communication. Mountford, Keith and the members of their 2013 Rhetoric Society of America seminar published "The Mount Oread Manifesto on Rhetorical Education," *Rhetoric Society Quarterly*, 2014, which calls for reforms in the teaching of speech and writing.

Prof. Mountford holds the MA and PhD in English/Rhetoric and Composition from The Ohio State University. She received her BA in English with honors from Malone College. She has served on the faculties of Rensselaer Polytechnic, the University of Arizona, and the University of Kentucky, where she led the effort to develop the Writing Program into the Department of Writing, Rhetoric, and Digital Studies. Her awards include the University of Arizona Foundation Leicester and Kathryn Sherrill Creative Teaching Award (1999) and the Faculty Center for Instructional Innovation Creative Use of Technology Award (1999), both for innovations in undergraduate education. She has served as an administrator on three campuses—11 years as a writing program administrator and 3 years as director of an academic unit.



## APPENDIX E: Custom Textbook



Although our main custom textbook is called *Everything's an Argument: Custom Edition for the University of Oklahoma*, in fact, the book includes a substantial selection of the following two books as well as all of *Everything's an Argument*, 7<sup>th</sup> edition:

Miller, Richard E. and Ann Jurecic. *Habits of the Creative Mind*. Bedford/St. Martin's, 2016.

O'Hair, Dan, Hannah Rubenstein and Rob Stewart. *A Pocket Guide to Public Speaking*, 5<sup>th</sup> edition. Bedford/St. Martin's, 2016.

The custom text is bundled with a separate book containing 3 chapters of Bonnie Stone Sunstein and Elizabeth Chiseri-Strater's *Fieldworking: Reading and Writing Research*, 4<sup>th</sup> edition.

In addition, OU FYC has added an introduction that covers our student learning outcomes, special campus resources, the course descriptions, and course policies. Our partnership with Macmillan means that students pay only \$45 per course for course materials (the entire bundle is used for both courses, and costs around \$90 at the campus bookstore new). OU FYC receives no royalties for this custom book in order to keep costs as low as possible for our students.

## APPENDIX F: Other OU FYC Courses

**ENGL 1013: English for Exchange Students I.** Curriculum parallels 1113. For exchange students who need more practice with their English but who will not stay for a degree at OU

**ENGL 1023: English for Exchange Students II.** Curriculum parallels 1213. For exchange students who need more practice with their English but who will not stay for a degree at OU

**ENGL 1913: Writing for the Health Professions.** For students in health professions and required by several majors. Taught online for students taking coursework at OU's Medical Campus.

**ENGL 3153: Technical Writing.** For science and engineering students and required by several majors for graduation. Prerequisite: ENGL 1213. (This curriculum is directed by Professor William Kurlinkus but staffed by OU FYC.)

## APPENDIX G: Letters of Support

Daniela Garofalo, Chair, Department of English, University of Oklahoma

Susan Kates, Professor, Department of English, University of Oklahoma

William Keith, Department of English, University of Wisconsin, Milwaukee



## *The University of Oklahoma*

August 25, 2017

DEPARTMENT OF ENGLISH

### **RE: the University of Oklahoma First-Year Composition Program's Application for a CCCC Writing Program of Excellence Award.**

I am writing to support the application of the University of Oklahoma First-Year Composition Program for the CCCC Excellence Award. Our FYC program used to be known as a failed program here at OU and many of us in the Department of English despaired of ever seeing improvement. However, the Provost of the University, after receiving numerous complaints, and motivated by a concern for retention, tasked the English Department with hiring a great writing program director who could turn things around.

In July 2015, Dr. Roxanne Mountford joined the OU English Department as our new FYC Director. As an experienced administrator, she was able to fully understand both the concerns of the department and upper administration and to begin remedying long standing and seemingly intractable problems. She hired a cadre of experience teaching professionals, full-time lecturers, whose jobs are permanent and secure, who have brought a high caliber of teaching to a program infamous for shabby teaching standards. Their presence elevates the teaching and professionalism of everyone involved in FYC, including our graduate students straight out of college. The program has also been a model of diversity hiring in terms of race and LGBTQ status; it also hires MA's and PhD's both in literature and rhetoric.

Our biggest problem perhaps was an unwieldy curriculum that was very difficult for inexperienced teachers to deliver, a curriculum roundly disliked and criticized by undergraduates. Dr. Mountford simply eliminated the old plan and, in her first year here, created a new curriculum that beautifully serves our needs.

1. It engages student interest, allowing them to pursue areas of intellectual curiosity
2. It is accessible to the first year students and can be taught successfully even by instructors who do not have a PhD in Writing and Rhetoric
3. It offers accessible readings that students enjoy and that speak directly to their writing projects.

The result of this new curriculum and our reliance on a more experienced cadre of teachers has been

1. Instantly higher student evaluations which express the students' surprise on finding that a required course can be both enjoyable and engaging, while connecting to other courses in significant ways
2. A much happier upper administration that thoroughly supports our program and champions it as a model for other departments
3. A happier and more productive teaching staff who believe in the curriculum they teach and are enthusiastic to bring it to the classroom
4. A program that now helps with retention efforts.

Almost every semester, I am stopped by a dean or other upper administrator who lets me know how delighted they are with the great changes in FYC. Some have heard supportive comments from the graduate students they supervise who love teaching here, others from their undergraduates, and some from parents who are pleased by their sons and daughters' improved writing.

In terms of the English Department, we are truly impressed by how quickly and thoroughly this program has changed. We are particularly impressed that the quality of employment has so greatly improved for our permanent instructors and that our graduate students, even our literature students, are enthused about teaching this curriculum. The changes have raised our morale because what was once a source of resigned embarrassment has become a source of pride.

I strongly recommend the OU FYC Program for an excellence award. Not only Dr. Mountford, but also her dedicated staff of assistant directors, admin staff, and teaching staff (too numerous to name but deserving recognition for their talent and success in the classroom) have worked diligently and creatively to completely change our program beyond what we could have hoped for.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, consisting of a stylized 'D' followed by a series of connected loops and a long horizontal stroke.

Daniela Garofalo  
Department Chair  
Department of English



*The UNIVERSITY of OKLAHOMA®*  
*The Department of English*

August 28, 2017

Dear Committee Members:

It is a great pleasure to write in support of the writing program at the University of Oklahoma for the CCCC Writing Program of Excellence Award! The story of our writing program is quite a story indeed! In just two short years, our WPA, Professor Roxanne Mountford and her team have turned First-Year Composition around at the University of Oklahoma and achieved simply remarkable results.

Over a period of twelve years, four different rhetoric and composition faculty members, including myself, took turns administering the program, creating new curricula and assessing it, trying to turn a negative impression of first-year composition into a positive one. None of us were successful because none of us were experienced WPAs.

But in the fall of 2014, we were granted a line in Composition, Rhetoric, and Literacy to search for an experienced and established writing program administrator. We had a very successful search and hired Professor Roxanne Mountford, who came to us with 14 years of administrative experience, 11 as a WPA. When she began in the summer of 2015, Professor Mountford made monumental changes in the program. She requested and received funding to hire a full-time administrative assistant, purchase a photocopying machine solely for FYC, and she and her team designed a new curriculum, teaching students to rhetorically analyze the relationship between their beliefs and values and their stance on public issues. The student response to this curriculum has been tremendous. Now students have the opportunity to engage and interrogate issues about which they are passionate and to learn about how the public realm affects them and how their civic actions (or lack thereof) affect others. It has been wonderful indeed to watch students, teachers, and upper administration at this university praise this new curriculum. Anyone who has ever been a WPA knows how difficult it is to please all of these constituencies. I consider it nothing short of amazing that Professor Mountford and her team's monumental efforts have inspired teachers and students to labor together in the interest of civic empathy.

FYC is now praised by the president and the dean who credit our FYC program for helping raise student retention and our overall student evaluations. The dean has said that we have become a model of first year education at the University of Oklahoma. I am in a unique position to marvel at the changes that have taken place in a brief period because I know the formidable challenges that my colleagues and I faced. I congratulate Professor Mountford, her team, our teachers, and our students on their remarkable achievements and I hope very much that our program might be distinguished by this prestigious award.

Sincerely,

*Susan Kates*

Susan Kates  
Professor of English  
Composition, Rhetoric, and Literacy



DEPARTMENT OF ENGLISH

CURTIN HALL 592  
UWM  
MILWAUKEE, WI  
53201-0413  
414 229-4511  
WMKEITH@UWM.EDU

August 30, 2018

Dear Selection Committee:

It is a pleasure to write in support of the University of Oklahoma's applications for the CCCC's Writing Program Certificate of Excellence. As a co-author of "The Mt. Oread Manifesto," I remember well the excitement in the Rhetoric Society of America seminar that conceived this bold statement for a possible composition program. Now Professor Mountford and the University of Oklahoma have made this conception a reality. They have crafted a remarkable, and possibly unique, program that will serve as a model for others.

OU FYC represents the future of composition instruction for several reasons. First among these is the intellectual, political and ethical coherence between the pedagogy and outcomes. Abandoning traditional genres and techniques, this program has been conceived from the ground up to embody the principles of civic rhetoric, focusing on the skills that follow from a robust, rhetoric-centered conception of public discourse. OU FYC introduces students to the best of what civic discourse can be: self-discovery, critical listening, the richness of dialogue and inquiry, as well as an adroit mixing of oral assignments that insure that students develop genuine relationships as they engage public argument through writing and thinking.

This course sequence features so many wonderful assignments and pedagogies, I'll mention just a few. English 1113 Project 2 displays a critical and nuanced understanding of the components of engaging civic dialogue: identifying values and shared values. An effective dialogue has to leverage, contingently and fluidly, values that both sides acknowledge, so this assignment builds skill in a crucial aspect of public discourse that our leaders need to improve. English 1213's "The Rant" is genius. This pedagogy engages students as speakers and thinkers in what is sometimes the worst of our public discourse, yet embeds it in a writing project that allows students to come to understand their passionate beliefs in the context of audiences and national conversations on a given topic. A final virtue, thematic to the course, is the expansion of the rhetorical concept of audience by adding "stakeholders." This is a reconfiguration of audience that prescinds any kind of marketing or advertising concept of audience (as demographic categories to be stereotyped by a writer) and moves toward a dynamic conception of readers and listeners as engaged members of a community (or many communities), motivated by interests which are amenable to reason.

I sometimes think of our job as helping students grow up to join the Big Conversations of our time, and this is the first year-long course I have seen which both aims at doing this – and does it. The assessment data show clearly that students are learning – and they know they are learning. The numbers are just astonishing. Nearly every student in both courses feels a personal connection to the course and values their experiences in the course. They felt that not only had their writing improved in general, but they were more prepared to engage in public discussion. These numbers show just how revolutionary and effective this system is.

I will confess that in the RSA seminar we talked a good deal about the institutional obstacles to realizing a vision of an FYC course that embodied the best of the rhetorical tradition, used today's best research and pedagogy, yet responded to our contemporary context in a fresh and vital way. OU FYC exceeds every expectation. Dr. Mountford and her crew of dedicated graduate students and professionals have produced a marvel. I had the opportunity to visit in August of 2016 and talk to them about integrating oral skills. The atmosphere was electric: dedicated people displaying terrific teamwork who clearly knew they were engaged in important work that would make a difference in the lives of students – and they were right.

I highly recommend this program for this Certificate of Excellence. It is very well deserved.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Wm. Keith". The script is cursive and fluid, with the first letters of "Wm." and "Keith" being capitalized and prominent.

William Keith, Professor  
Department of English  
University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee