

ENGL 6940 - Writing and the Public Sphere: Community Literacies and Organizational Storytelling

Fall 2026 Syllabus, Section 01, CRN 43941,

Credit hours: 3

Instructor

Maria Conti Maravillas

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Public Instructor Information

Instructor Title: Assistant Professor of English

Instructor Professional Qualifications:

- PhD, Rhetoric, Composition, and the Teaching of English, The University of Arizona, 2019
- MA, Literature and Writing, Kent State University, 2014
- BA, English, Walsh University, 2012

Instructor Office Location: DeBartolo 241

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Course Description

6940. Writing and the Public Sphere: Community Literacies and Organizational Storytelling. This course addresses storytelling in public contexts, focusing on such areas as writing for social change, community literacy projects, digital and social media communications, social and political campaigns, and organizational storytelling by for-profit businesses, not-for-profit organizations, and other entities. Students will gain practice in modes of public and civic discourse as well as organizational communication. As writers, students will learn to analyze specific writing situations and strategically employ writing strategies, genres, and story-based approaches to communications. 3 s.h.

Prerequisite: Graduate standing

Writing is something that can be improved through practice. Every writer, regardless of their prior writing experiences, can succeed in this course if they apply effort, use resources effectively, reflect on their writing strategies, and make changes as needed. My hope is that all students will develop the knowledge they need to do well and that all students—even those who perform well early in the semester—will develop greater knowledge and skills through practice. The goal is to prepare you for writing and communicative tasks in the university, in the workplace, and in your civic, social, and professional life.

Course Readings

Group	Title	Author	ISBN
Required	The Public Work of Rhetoric: Citizen-Scholars and Civic Engagement	eds John M. Ackerman and David J. Coogan	
Required	Reading Rhetorical Theory: Speech, Representation, and Power	ed. Atilla Hallsby	
Required	Compose, Design, Advocate: A Rhetoric for Multimodal Communication	eds. Anne Frances Wysocki and Dennis A. Lynch	
Required	Social Writing/Social Media: Publics, Presentations, and Pedagogies	eds. Douglas M. Walls and Stephanie Vie	
Required	Writing Spaces: Readings on Writing, volume 4	Edited by Dana Driscoll, Megan Heise, Mary Stewart, and Matthew Vetter	
Required	Made to Stick: Why Some Ideas Survive and Others Die	Chip Heath and Dan Heath	

Required	The Organizational Storytelling Workbook: How to Harness This Powerful Communication and Management Tool	David Collins
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All readings are available on Blackboard as uploaded or linked resources (you do NOT need to purchase the books in which they are published):

- Linda Flower, "Going Public—in a Disabling Discourse"
- Caroline Gottschalk Druschke et al., "Stories from the Flood: Promoting Healing and Fostering Policy Change through Storytelling, Community Literacy, and Community-based Learning"
- Mark Lyons, "Listen to My Story: The Transformative Power of Storytelling in Immigrant Communities"
- Carlos A. Flores and Sarah E. Jones, "Part 1: Defining Publics and Counterpublics"
- Carlos A. Flores and Sarah E. Jones, "Part 2: Case Studies in Counterpublic Rhetoric"
- Anne Frances Wysocki and Dennis A. Lynch, "Steps for Rhetorical Analysis" and "Analyzing Videos"
- Julie Collins Bates, "Activist Archival Research, Environmental Intervention, and the Flint Water Crisis"
- Kara Poe-Alexander and Leslie A. Hahner, "The Intimate Screen: Revisualizing Understandings of Down Syndrome through Digital Activism on Instagram"
- Ashley J. Holmes, "Public Writing for Social Change"
- Chip Heath and Dan Heath, "Introduction—What Sticks?" and "Emotional"
- David Collins, "Maxims for Organizational Storytelling"
- Ellen Cushman and Erik Green, "Knowledge Work with the Cherokee Nation: The Pedagogy of Engaging Publics in a Praxis of New Media"
- Anne Frances Wysocki and Dennis A. Lynch, "About Multimodal Communication"
- Anne Frances Wysocki and Dennis A. Lynch, "Visible Ethos, Logos, and Pathos"

The course readings are subject to change in the event of extenuating circumstances, research developments, current events, and/or to ensure better learning.

Course Schedule

Day	Date	Reading(s)	Proposed Topic	Due/To Prepare for Class
Tue	8/25		Storytelling and the Public Sphere	No written assignments due for class on 8/25.
Thu	8/27	Read Linda Flower, "Going Public—in a Disabling Discourse," pp. 137-153 Read syllabus	Storytelling and the Public Sphere	Complete Intro to Course Survey; Complete AI Appropriate Use Commitment Form Discussion Post #1 option (post at least once for a reading from 8/27, 9/1, 9/3, or 9/8)
Tue	9/1	Read Caroline Gottschalk Druschke et al., "Stories from the Flood: Promoting Healing and Fostering Policy Change through Storytelling, Community Literacy, and Community-based Learning," pp. 107-118 Read Mark Lyons, "Listen to My Story: The Transformative Power of Storytelling in Immigrant Communities," pp. 231-241	Community Literacies, Digital Storytelling, and Social Media Rhetorics	Discussion Post #1 option (post at least once for a reading from 8/27, 9/1, 9/3, or 9/8)
Thu	9/3	Read Carlos A. Flores and Sarah E. Jones, "Part 1: Defining Publics and Counterpublics"	Publics and Counterpublics	Discussion Post #1 option (post at least once for a reading from 8/27, 9/1, 9/3, or 9/8)
Tue	9/8	Read Carlos A. Flores and Sarah E. Jones, "Part 2: Case Studies in Counterpublic Rhetoric"	Publics and Counterpublics	Discussion Post #1 due (post at least once for a reading from 8/27, 9/1, 9/3, or 9/8)
Thu	9/10	Read Anne Frances Wysocki and Dennis A. Lynch, "Steps for Rhetorical Analysis," pp. 332-344 and "Analyzing Videos," pp. 443-467	Rhetorical Analysis	Proposal for Rhetorical Analysis due; Discussion Post #2 option (post at least once for a reading from 9/10, 9/15, or 9/17)



Tue	9/15	Read Julie Collins Bates, "Activist Archival Research, Environmental Intervention, and the Flint Water Crisis," pp. 208-233	Community Literacies	Discussion Post #2 option (post at least once for a reading from 9/10, 9/15, or 9/17).
Thu	9/17	Read Kara Poe-Alexander and Leslie A. Hahner, "The Intimate Screen: Revisualizing Understandings of Down Syndrome through Digital Activism on Instagram," pp. 225-240	Social Media Rhetorics	Discussion Post #2 due (post at least once for a reading from 9/10, 9/15, or 9/17).
Tue	9/22		Peer Review and Instructor Conferences	First Draft of Rhetorical Analysis due; Continue working on your Rhetorical Analysis.
Thu	9/24		Peer Review and Instructor Conferences	Continue working on your Rhetorical Analysis.
Tue	9/29		Peer Review and Instructor Conferences	Continue working on your Rhetorical Analysis.
Thu	10/1	Read Ashley J. Holmes, "Public Writing for Social Change"	Public Rhetorical Situation	Revision Memo 1 due; Discussion Post #3 option (post at least once for a reading from 10/1, 10/6, 10/8, 10/13, or 10/15).
Tue	10/6	Read Chip Heath and Dan Heath, "Introduction—What Sticks?," pp. 3-24	Organizational Storytelling	Final Rhetorical Analysis due; Discussion Post #3 option (post at least once for a reading from 10/1, 10/6, 10/8, 10/13, or 10/15).
Thu	10/8	Read Chip Heath and Dan Heath, "Emotional," pp. 165-203	Organizational Storytelling; Effective Annotated Bibliographies	Proposal for Public Writing Project due; Discussion Post #3 option (post at least once for a reading from 10/1, 10/6, 10/8, 10/13, or 10/15).
Tue	10/13	Read David Collins, "Maxims for Organizational Storytelling"	Organizational Storytelling	Discussion Post #3 option (post at least once for a reading from 10/1, 10/6, 10/8, 10/13, or 10/15).
Thu	10/15	Read Ellen Cushman and Erik Green, "Knowledge Work with the Cherokee Nation: The Pedagogy of Engaging Publics in a Praxis of New Media," pp. 175-190	Research Strategies for Public Writing	Discussion Post #3 due (post at least once for a reading from 10/1, 10/6, 10/8, 10/13, or 10/15); Work on Annotated Bibliography (due 10/22).
Tue	10/20	Read Anne Frances Wysocki and Dennis A. Lynch, "About Multimodal Communication," pp. 304-324	Multimodal Literacies	Feedback Reflection due
Thu	10/22	Read Anne Frances Wysocki and Dennis A. Lynch, "Visible Ethos, Logos, and Pathos," pp. 270-291	Visual Rhetorics	Annotated Bibliography due; Work on First Draft of Public Writing Project (due 11/5).
Tue	10/27		Exploring Genres for Public Writing Project	Work on First Draft of Public Writing Project (due 11/5).
Thu	10/29		Exploring Genres for Public Writing Project	Work on First Draft of Public Writing Project (due 11/5).
Tue	11/3		Class Cancelled—independent writing time on your Public Writing Project	Work on First Draft of Public Writing Project (due 11/5).
Thu	11/5		Peer Review and Instructor Conferences	First Draft of Public Writing Project due Prepare questions and feedback areas in advance of your instructor conference.
Tue	11/10		Peer Review and Instructor Conferences	Work on Revision Memo 2 (due 11/24), presentation and speech, and Public Writing Project (due 12/8).
Thu	11/12		Peer Review and Instructor Conferences	Work on Revision Memo 2 (due 11/24), presentation and speech, and Public Writing Project (due 12/8).
Tue	11/17		Peer Review and Instructor Conferences	Work on Revision Memo 2 (due 11/24), presentation and speech, and Public Writing Project (due 12/8).

Thu	11/19	Presentations on Final Projects and Feedback	Prepare presentation materials and speech; Work on Revision Memo 2 (due 11/24), presentation and speech, and Public Writing Project (due 12/8).
Tue	11/24	Presentations on Final Projects and Feedback	Revision Memo 2 due; Prepare presentation materials and speech; Work on Public Writing Project (due 12/8).
Thu	11/26	YSU Closed	Enjoy your holiday!
Tue	12/1	Presentations on Final Projects and Feedback	Prepare presentation materials and speech; Work on Public Writing Project (due 12/8).
Thu	12/3	Finalizing the Public Writing Project	Work on Public Writing Project (due 12/8).
Tue	12/8	TBD	Final Public Writing Project due; You are responsible for checking your YSU email once per day until 12/13 (when final grades are submitted) in case of issues with technology, files, submission, etc.

The course schedule, policies, procedures, and assignments in this course are subject to change in the event of extenuating circumstances, by mutual agreement, and/or to ensure better learning.